

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

The Samhain Song Press Ultimate Grimoire and Spellbook Of Real Ancient Witchcraft

**Being a Most "Un-Fluffy" Compilation
of Magickal Spells, Incantations, Herbal Lore
and Cures Gathered from Ancient and
Reliable Sources**

This Samhain Song Press Edition Copyright © 2008
by Samhain Song Press. View our complete catalog
of classic witchcraft and pagan quality reprints at

www.SamhainSong.com

The Ultimate Grimoire and Spellbook Of Real Ancient Witchcraft is Copyright © 2008 by *Samhain Song Press*.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission, except by a newspaper or magazine reviewer who wishes to quote brief passages in connection with a review.

A *Samhain Song Press* publication
View the complete *Samhain Song Press* catalog at
www.SamhainSong.com

Editorial, sales and distribution, rights and permission inquiries should be sent via e-mail to samhainsong@yahoo.com.

Traditional Sources / *The Ultimate Grimoire and Spellbook Of Real Ancient Witchcraft* / Compiled from Various Traditional Sources.

First *Samhain Song Press* Edition

ISBN 978-1-4357-4201-7

1. Spells. 2. Wicca. 3. Witchcraft. 4. Herbalism.
4. Magic 6. Magick. 7. Title

Legal Disclaimer: All information in this book is provided for educational purposes only, as a folklore reference, and is not to be construed as medical advice, or to diagnose, treat, prevent or cure any disease, or as a substitute for competent medical care.

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

One of the hottest debates raging in the 21st Century Neopagan community concerns the definition of two basic terms – *Wicca* and *Witchcraft*. Most followers of the peaceful, earth-centered, Goddess-worshipping Wiccan religion (ala Starhawk, Silver Ravenwolf, Scott Cunningham and their followers) consider themselves, by their own understanding of the term, to be practitioners of witchcraft as well. Religious Wiccan mostly view the two terms as essentially synonymous. The other side of the debate is argued by a separate, perhaps a shade "darker" subset of the pagan community, folks who call themselves simply *Witches* (never *Wiccans*!), and who often believe that the witchcraft they practice is not a religion at all, but rather a supernatural path to personal power, a system of magickal beliefs and practices designed to bring their minds, bodies and spirits into alignment with the sometimes violent, always morally-neutral fundamental forces of nature. Such natural spiritual alignment empowers them to bend and shape reality in conformity with Will, sometimes to cure and create, other times to curse or destroy, as appropriate to the situation at hand. These Witches generally view religious Wicca as a naïve modern creation, a "fluffy bunny"¹ social movement closely akin to the crystal-waving New Age groups that have flourished throughout America and Europe since the 1930s.

It is not my goal in this brief preface to take sides in the modern *Wicca* VS *Witchcraft* debate, only to recommend *The Samhain Song Press Ultimate Grimoire and Spellbook of Real Ancient Witchcraft* as an invaluable resource for your personal research into the question. Note before proceeding that every word you will read in the chapters ahead was penned prior to the year 1900 – half a century or more before Gerald Gardner's 1950's release of *Witchcraft Today*, the book that is credited with having launched the modern Wiccan tradition. Note also that the classic 19th Century works featured in this omnibus collection both mine and preserve living veins of ancient wisdom, folklore, superstition and popular belief that were already passing out of existence when these works were composed, and which by Gardner's post WWII writing days, had been long driven by modernization into cultural extinction.

But fear not! *The Samhain Song Press Ultimate Grimoire and Spellbook of Real Ancient Witchcraft* is no dull work of ethnology! This is a true *spell book* filled with clear instructions for making magick happen, for cursing and curing, for binding a lover, for recovering stolen objects and for punishing the thief, for conjuring prophetic dreams, and every other imaginable application of the supernatural arts. This is a book of real ancient witchcraft. It is at once a practical guide to wielding magick the way our ancient ancestors understood

it, and a mesmerizing window granting us an accurate vision of their times and way of life. How the view through that window impacts your personal position in the *Wicca VS Witchcraft* debate is entirely up to you.

For those Wiccans/Witches/Pagans who find Christianity distasteful or troubling, be warned that some sections of this book, especially those taken from John George Hohman's *Pow-Wows; Or, Long Lost Friend*, make extensive use of Christian language and imagery – but keep in mind when you study these passages that the Christianity practiced by Pennsylvania Dutch Pow Wow magicians is by no means the same Sunday morning moralism espoused by your squeaky-clean Protestant neighbors or even the robed priests manning the altar at the Catholic Cathedral downtown. Like the Afro-Caribbean religions of Voodoo, Santeria, et al, Pow Wow (and all other, genuinely preserved European magickal traditions) survived centuries of Christian persecution by "embracing the enemy," painting the ancient gods and spirits in the colors, names and stories of the Mother Church, while secretly maintaining the inner integrity of the original system. When you read these passages, see past the veneer to the truths contained inside. Change "Jesus" to "Zeus" or "Thor" and "The Virgin Mary" to "Hera" or "Freya," and the spell will still work. Real gods are not picky about the names by which mortals invoke them!

Finally, please be aware that much real ancient witchcraft was, to put it frankly, quite *grotesque*. Some spells in this volume call for the flesh of human corpses or the body parts of animals. Any 21st century magick user worth his or her salt, and with a copy of any "Wicca-101" table of correspondences in hand, ought to be able to dream up a dozen non-lethal, safe and legal substitutions for any such spell ingredient. There's more than one way to skin a cat, as the saying goes, and only whacko teenage Satanists and other low self-esteem losers actually do such things anymore. It's the 21st Century, folks -- *Improvise!* Cats are sacred to the Goddess in just about every ancient culture on Earth. Skin one and you will pay... *Witch* or *Wiccan* – be smart! Don't risk Divine Disembowelment!

Happy spellcasting!

Hrafen Starbourne, Editor
Samhain Song Press

¹ The term "fluffy bunny" is used within Neopaganism as derogatory label for Wiccans and other religious Neopagans who tend to focus primarily upon the most accessible or emotionally uplifting aspects of the faith, while downplaying the more serious, traditional aspects, often expressing their beliefs in a New Age or "sweetness and light" manner.

The Samhain Song Press Ultimate Grimoire and Spellbook Of Real Ancient Witchcraft

In Five Parts:

Part One:

Charms, Spells and Cures as Recorded In

**Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms,
and Superstitions of Ireland**

by Lady Francesca Speranza Wilde

Part Two:

Blessings, Curses, Spells and Strange Magicks From

**ARADIA
or the Gospel of the Witches**

by Charles G. Leland

Part Three:

Incantations and Specimens of Medical Magic From

**GYPSY SORCERY
and
FORTUNE TELLING**

by Charles Godfrey Leland

Part Four:

A Collection Of Mysterious And Invaluable Arts And
Remedies, For Man As Well As Animals, With Many Proofs

From

JOHN GEORGE HOHMAN'S

POW-WOWS; OR, LONG LOST FRIEND

Part Five:

THE FOLK-LORE OF PLANTS

by T.F. THISELTON-DYER

Part One:

Charms, Spells and Cures as Recorded In Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland

by Lady Francesca Speranza Wilde

Original Publication, 1887



THE FATAL LOVE-CHARM

A POTENT love-charm used by women is a piece of skin taken from the arm of a corpse and tied on the person while sleeping whose love is sought. The skin is then removed after some time, and carefully put away before the sleeper awakes or has any consciousness of the transaction. And as long as it remains in the woman's possession the love of her lover will be unchanged. Or the strip of skin is placed under the head to dream on, in the name of the Evil One, when the future husband will appear in the dream.

A young girl who was servant in the large and handsome house of a rich family tried this charm for fun, thinking she would dream of one of her fellow-servants, and next morning her mistress asked the result.

"Throth, ma'am," she answered, "there never was such a foolish trick, for it was of the master himself I was dreaming all night, and of no one else."

Soon after the lady died, and the girl, remembering her dream, watched her opportunity to tie a piece of skin taken from a corpse recently buried round the arm of her master while he slept. After this he became violently in love with the girl, though she was exceedingly ugly, and within the year he married her, his love all the while remaining fervent and unchanged.

But exactly one year and a day after her marriage her bedroom took fire by accident, and the strip of skin, which she had kept carefully hidden in her wardrobe, was burnt, along with all her grand wedding-clothes. Immediately the magic charm was broken, and the hatred of the gentleman for his low-born wife became as strong as the love he had once felt for her.

In her rage and grief at finding nothing but coldness and insult, she confessed the whole story; and, in consequence, the horror she inspired amongst the people was so great that no one would serve her with food or drink, or sit near her, or hold any intercourse with her; and she died miserably and half mad before the second year was out--a warning and a terror to all who work spells in the name of the Evil One.

EVIL SPELLS

Cathal the King

IT is said by wise women and fairy doctors that the roots of the elder tree, and the roots of an apple tree that bears red apples, if boiled together and drunk fasting, will expel any evil living thing or evil spirit that may have taken up its abode in the body of a man.

But an evil charm to produce a living thing in the body can also be made, by pronouncing a certain magic and wicked spell over the food or drink taken by any person that an enemy wishes to injure.

One should therefore be very cautious in accepting anything to eat from a person of known malicious tongue and spiteful heart, or who has an ill will against you, for poison lies in their glance and in the touch of their hands; and an evil spell is in their very presence, and on all they do, say, or touch.

Cathal, king of Munster, was the tallest and handsomest of all the kings of Erin, and he fell deeply in love with the beautiful sister of Fergus, king of Ulster; and the lovers were happy in, their love and resolved on marriage. But Fergus, King of the North, had a mortal hatred to Cathal, King of the South, and wished, in secret, to prevent the marriage. So he set a watch over his sister, and by this means found out that she was sending a basket of the choicest apples to her lover, by the hands of a trusty messenger. On this Fergus managed to get hold of the basket of fruit from the messenger; and he changed them secretly for another lot of apples, over which he worked an evil spell. Furnished with these the messenger set out for Cathal, and presented them to Cathal the king, who, delighted at this proof of love from his princess, began at once to eat the apples. But the more he ate, the more he longed for them, for a wicked spell was on every apple. When he had eaten them all up, he sent round the country for more, and ate, and ate, until there was not an apple left in Cashel, nor in all the country round.

Then he bade his chieftains go forth and bring in food to appease his appetite; and he ate up all the cattle and the grain and the fruit, and still cried for more; and had the houses searched for food to bring to him. So the people were in despair, for they had no more food, and starvation was over the land.

Now a great and wise man, the chief poet of his tribe, happened to be travelling through Munster at that time, and hearing of the king's state, he greatly desired to see him, for he knew there was devil's work in the evil spell. So they brought him to the king, and many strong invocations he uttered over him, and many powerful incantations, for poets have a knowledge of mysteries above all other men; until finally, after three days had passed, he announced to the lords and chiefs that on that night, when the moon rose, the spell would be broken, and the king restored to his wonted health. So all the chiefs gathered round in the courtyard to watch; but no one was allowed to enter the room where the king lay, save only the poet. And he was to give the signal when the hour had come and the spell was broken.

So as they watched, and just as the moon rose, a great cry was heard from the king's room, and the poet, flinging open the door, bade the chiefs enter; and there on the floor lay a huge dead wolf, who for a whole year had

taken up his abode in the king's body; but was now happily cast forth by the strong incantations of the poet.

After this the king fell into a deep sleep, and when he awoke he was quite well, and strong again as ever, in all the pride of his youth and beauty. At this the people rejoiced much, for he was greatly loved, and the poet who had restored him was honoured above all men in the land; for the king himself took off the golden torque from his own neck, and placed it on that of the poet, and he set him at his right hand at the feast.

Now a strange thing happened just at this time; for Fergus, King of the North, fell ill, and wasted away to a shadow, and of all the beautiful meats and wines they set before him he could taste nothing. So he died before a year had passed by; and then Cathal the king wedded his beloved princess, and they lived happily through many years.

THE POET'S MALEDICTION

The imprecations of the poets had often also a mysterious and fatal effect.

King Breas, the pagan monarch, was a fierce, cruel, and niggardly man, who was therefore very unpopular with the people, who hate the cold heart and the grudging hand.

Amongst others who suffered by the king's inhospitality, was the renowned Carbury the poet, son of Eodain, the great poetess of the Tuatha-de-Danann race; she who chanted the song of victory when her people conquered the Firbolgs, on the plains of Moytura; and the stone that she stood on, during the battle, in sight of all the warriors, is still existing, and is pointed out as the stone of Eodain the poetess, with great reverence, even to this day.

It was her son, Carburv the poet, who was held in such high honour by the nation, that King Breas invited him to his court, in order that he might pronounce a powerful malediction over the enemy with whom he was then at war.

Carbury came on the royal summons, but, in place of being treated with the distinction due to his high rank, he was lodged and fed so meanly that the soul of the poet raged with wrath for the king gave him for lodgement only a small stone cell with-out fire or a bed; and for food he had only three cakes of meal without any flesh meat or sauce, and no wine was given him, such wine as is fit to light up the poet's soul before the divine mystic spirit of song can awake in its power within him. So very early the next morning, the poet rose up and departed, with much rage in his heart. But as he passed the king's house he stopped, and in place of a blessing, pronounced a

terrible malediction over Breas and his race, which can still be found in the ancient books of Ireland, commencing thus—

*"Without fire, without bed, on the surface of the floor!
Without meat, without fowl, on the surface of the dish.
Three little dishes and no flesh thereon,
A cell without bed, a dish without meat, a cup without wine,
Are these fit offerings from a king to a poet?
May the king and his race be three times accursed for ever and for ever!"*

Immediately three large blisters rose on the king's forehead, and remained there as a sign and mark of the poet's vengeance.

And from that day forth to his death, which happened not long after, the reign of Breas was a time of sore trouble and disaster, for he was three times defeated by his enemies, and from care and sorrow a grievous disease fell on him; for though hungry he could not swallow any food; and though all the meat and wine of the best was set before him, yet his throat seemed closed, and though raging with hunger yet not a morsel could pass his lips; and so he died miserably, starved in the midst of plenty, and accursed in all things by the power and malediction of the angry poet.

DRIMIAL AGUS THORIAL

(A Wicked Spell)

When a girl wishes to gain the love of a man, and to make him marry her, the dreadful spell is used called *Drimial Agus Thorial*. At dead of night, she and an accomplice go to a churchyard, exhume a newly-buried corpse, and take a strip of the skin from the head to the heel. This is wound round the girl as a belt with a solemn invocation to the devil for his help.

After she has worn it for a day and a night she watches her opportunity and ties it round the sleeping man whose love she desires; during which process the name of God must not be mentioned.

When he awakes the man is bound by the spell; and is forced to marry the cruel and evil harpy. It is said the children of such marriages bear a black mark round the wrist, and are known and shunned by the people, who call them "sons of the devil."

THE MAY FESTIVAL

THERE were four great festivals held in Ireland from the most ancient pagan times, and these four sacred seasons were February, May, Midsummer, and November. May was the most memorable and auspicious of all; then the Druids lit the *Baal-Tinne*, the holy, goodly fire of Baal, the Sun-god, and they drove the cattle on a path made between two fires, and singed them with the flame of a lighted torch, and sometimes they cut them to spill blood, and then burnt, the blood as a sacred offering to the Sun-god.

The great feast of Bel, or the Sun, took place on *May Eve*; and that of Samhain, or the Moon, on November Eve; when libations were poured out to appease the evil spirits, and also the spirits of the dead, who come out of their graves on that night to visit their ancient homes.

The Phoenicians, it is known, adored the Supreme Being under the name of Bel-Samen, and it is remarkable that the peasants in Ireland, wishing you good luck, say in Irish, "The blessing of Bel, and the blessing of Samhain, be with you," that is, of the sun and of the moon.

These were the great festivals of the Druids, when all domestic fires were extinguished, in order to be re-lit by the sacred fire taken from the temples, for it was deemed sacrilege to have any fires kindled except from the holy altar flame.

St. Patrick, however, determined to break down the power of the Druids; and, therefore, in defiance of their laws, he had a great fire lit on May Eve, when he celebrated the paschal mysteries; and henceforth Easter, or the Feast of the Resurrection, took the place of the Baal festival.

The Baal fires were originally used for human sacrifices and burnt-offerings of the first-fruits of the cattle; but after Christianity was established the children and cattle were only passed between two fires for purification from sin, and as a safeguard against the power of the devil.

The Persians also extinguished the domestic fires on the Baal festival, the 21st of April, and were obliged to re-light them from the temple fires, for which the priests were paid a fee in silver money. A fire kindled by rubbing two pieces of wood together was also considered lucky by the Persians; then water was boiled over the flame, and afterwards sprinkled on the people and on the cattle. The ancient Irish ritual resembles the Persian in every particular, and the Druids, no doubt, held the traditional worship exactly as brought from the East, the land of the sun and of tree worship and well worship.

May Day, called in Irish *Là-Beltaine*, the day of the Baal fires, was the festival of greatest rejoicing held in Ireland. But the fairies have great power at that season, and children and cattle, and the milk and butter, must be well guarded from their influence. A spent coal must be put under the churn, and another under the cradle; and primroses must be scattered before the door, for the fairies cannot pass the flowers. Children that die in April are

supposed to be carried off by the fairies, who are then always on the watch to abduct whatever is young and beautiful for their fairy homes.

Sometimes on the 1st of May, a sacred heifer, snow white, appeared amongst the cattle; and this was considered to bring the highest good luck to the farmer. An old Irish song that alludes to the heifer, may be translated thus—

*"There is a cow on the mountain,
A fair white cow
She goes East and she goes West,
And my senses have gone for love of her
She goes with the sun and he forgets to burn,
And the moon turns her face with love to her,
My fair white cow of the mountain."*

The fairies are in the best of humours upon May Eve, and the music of the fairy pipes may be heard all through the night, while the fairy folk are dancing upon the rath. It is then they carry off the young people to join their revels; and if a girl has once danced to the fairy music, she will move ever after with such fascinating grace, that it has passed into a proverb to say of a good dancer, "She has danced to fairy music on the hill."

At the great long dance held in old times on May Day, all the people held hands and danced round a great May-bush erected on a mound. The circle sometimes extended for a mile, the girls wearing garlands, and the young men carrying wands of green boughs, while the elder people sat round on the grass as spectators, and applauded the ceremony. The tallest and strongest young men in the county stood in the centre and directed the movements, while the pipers and harpers, wearing green and gold sashes, played the most spirited dance tunes.

The oldest worship of the world was of the sun and moon, of trees, wells, and the serpent that gave wisdom. Trees were the symbol of knowledge, and the dance round the May-bush is part of the ancient ophite ritual. The Baila also, or waltz, is associated with Baal worship, where the two circling motions are combined; the revolution of the planet on its own axis, and also round the Sun.

In Italy, this ancient festival, called *Calendi Maggio*, is celebrated in the rural districts much in the Irish way. Dante fell in love at the great *May Day* festival, held in the Portinari Palace. The Slavonic nations likewise light sacred fires, and dance round a tree hung with garlands on May Day. This reverence for the tree is one of the oldest superstitions of humanity and the most universal, and the fires are a relic of the old pagan worship paid to the Grynian Apollo--fire above all things being held sacred by the Irish as a safeguard from evil spirits. It is a saying amongst them, "Fire and salt are the two most sacred things given to man, and if you give them away on

May Day, you give away your luck for the year." Therefore no one will allow milk, or fire, or salt, to be carried away from the house on that day; and if people came in and asked for a lighted sod, they would be driven away with curses, for their purpose was evil.

The witches, however, make great efforts to steal the milk on May morning, and if they succeed, the luck passes from the family, and the milk and butter for the whole year will belong to the fairies. The best preventative is to scatter primroses on the threshold; and the old women tie bunches of primroses to the cows' tails, for the evil spirits cannot touch anything guarded by these flowers, if they are plucked before sunrise, not else. A piece of iron, also, made red hot, is placed upon the hearth; any old iron will do, the older the better, and branches of whitethorn and mountain ash are wreathed round the doorway for luck. The mountain ash has very great and mysterious qualities. If a branch of it be woven into the roof, that house is safe from fire for a year at least, and if a branch of it is mixed with the timber of a boat, no storm will upset it, and no man in it will be drowned for a twelvemonth certain. To save milk from witchcraft, the people on May morning cut and peel some branches of the mountain ash, and bind the twigs round the milk pails and the churn. No witch or fairy will then be able to steal the milk or butter. But all this must be done *before sunrise*. However, should butter be missed, follow the cow to the field, and gather the clay her hoof has touched; then, on returning home, place it under the churn with a live coal and a handful of salt, and your butter is safe from man or woman, fairy or fiend, for that year. There are other methods also to preserve a good supply of butter in the churn; a horse-shoe tied on it; a rusty nail from a coffin driven into the side: a cross made of the leaves of veronica placed at the bottom of the milk pail; but the mountain ash is the best of all safeguards against witchcraft and devil's magic. Without some of these precautions the fairies will certainly overlook the churn, and the milk and butter, in consequence, will fail all through the year, and the farmer suffer great loss. Herbs gathered on May Eve have a mystical and strong virtue for curing disease; and powerful potions are made then by the skilful herb women and fairy doctors, which no sickness can resist, chiefly of the yarrow, called in Irish "the herb of seven needs" or cures, from its many and great virtues. Divination is also practised to a great extent by means of the yarrow. The girls dance round it singing—

*"Yarrow, yarrow, yarrow,
I bid thee good morrow,
And tell me before to-morrow
Who my true love shall be."*

The herb is then placed under the head at night., and in dreams the true lover will appear. Another mode of divination for the future fate in life is by

snails. The young girls go out early before sunrise to trace the path of the snails in the clay, for always a letter is marked, and this is the initial of the true lover's name. A black snail is very unlucky to meet first in the morning, for his trail would read *death*; but a white snail brings good fortune. A white lamb on the right hand is also good; but the cuckoo is ominous of evil. Of old the year began with the 1st of May, and an ancient Irish rhyme says —

*"A white lamb on my right side,
So will good come to me;
But not the little false cuckoo
On the first clay of the year."*

Prophecies were also made from the way the wind blew on May mornings. In '98 an old man, who was drawing near to his end and like to die, inquired from those around him--

Where did you leave the wind last night?" (May Eve.)

They told him it came from the north.

"Then," he said, "the country is lost to the Clan Gael; our enemies will triumph had it been from the south, we should have had the victory; but now the Sassenach will trample us to dust." And he fell back and died.

Ashes are often sprinkled on the threshold on May Eve; and if the print of a foot is found in the morning, turned inward, it be-tokens marriage; but if turned outward, death. On May Eve the fairy music is heard on all the hills, and many beautiful tunes have been caught up in this way by the people and the native musicians.

About a hundred years ago a celebrated tune, called *Moraleana*, was learnt by a piper as he traversed the hills one evening; and he played it perfectly, note by note, as he heard it from the fairy pipes; on which a voice spoke to him and said that he would be allowed to play the tune *three times* in his life before all the people, but never a fourth, or a doom would fall on him. However, one day he had a great contest for supremacy with another piper, and at last, to make sure of victory, he played the wonderful fairy melody; when all the people applauded and declared he had won the prize by reason of its beauty, and that no music could equal his. So they crowned him with the garland; but at that moment he turned deadly pale, the pipes dropped from his hand, and he fell lifeless to the ground. For nothing escapes the fairies; they know all things, and their vengeance is swift and sure.

It is very dangerous to sleep out in the open air in the month of May, for the fairies are very powerful then, and on the watch to carry off the handsome girls for fairy brides, and the young mothers as nurses for the fairy babies; while the young men are selected as husbands for the beautiful fairy princesses.

A young man died suddenly on May Eve while he was lying asleep under a hay-rick, and the parents and friends knew immediately that he had been carried off to the fairy palace in the great moat of Granard. So a renowned fairy man was sent for, who promised to have him back in nine days. Meanwhile he desired that food and drink of time best should be left daily for the young man at a certain place on the moat. This was done, and time food always disappeared, by which they knew time young man was living, and came out of the moat nightly for the provisions left for him by his people.

Now on the ninth day a great crowd assembled to see time young man brought back from Fairyland. And in time midst stood the fairy doctor performing his incantations by means of fire and a powder which he threw into the flames that caused a dense grey smoke to arise. Then, taking off his hat, and holding a key in his hand, he called out. three times in a loud voice, "Come forth, come forth, come forth!" On which a shrouded figure slowly rose up in time midst of the smoke, and a voice was heard answering, "Leave me in peace; I am happy with my fairy bride, and my parents need not weep for me, for I shall bring them good luck, and guard them from evil evermore."

Then the figure vanished and the smoke cleared, and the parents were content, for they believed the vision, and having loaded the fairy-man with presents, they sent him away home.

MAY-DAY SUPERSTITIONS

THE marsh marigold is considered of great use in divination, and is called "the shrub of Beltaine." Garlands are made of it for the cattle and the door-posts to keep off the fairy power. Milk also is poured on the threshold, though none would be given away; nor fire, nor salt--these three things being sacred. There are many superstitions concerning May-the. It is not safe to go on the water the first Monday in May. Hares found on May morning are supposed to be witches, and should be stoned.

If the fire goes out on May morning it is considered very unlucky, and it cannot be re-kindled except by a lighted sod brought from the priest's house. And the ashes of this blessed turf are afterwards sprinkled on the floor and the threshold of the house. Neither fire, nor water, nor milk, nor salt should he given away for love or money, and if a wayfarer is given a cup of milk, he must drink it in the house, and salt must he mixed with it. Salt and water as a drink is at all times considered a potent. Charm against evil, if properly prepared by a fairy doctor and the magic words said over it.

One day in May a young girl lay down to rest at noontide on a fairy rath and fell asleep--a thing of great danger, for the fairies are strong in power

during the May month, and are particularly on the watch for a mortal bride to carry away to the fairy mansions, for they love the sight of human beauty. So they spirited away the young sleeping girl, and only left a shadowy resemblance of her lying on the rath. Evening came on, and as the young girl had not returned, her mother sent out messengers in all directions to look for her. At last she was found on the fairy rath, lying quite unconscious, like one dead.

They carried her home and laid her on her bed, but she neither spoke nor moved. So three days passed over. Then they thought it right to send for the fairy doctor. At once he said that she was fairy struck, and he gave them a salve made of herbs to anoint her hands and her brow every morning at sunrise, and every night when the moon rose; and salt was sprinkled on the threshold and round her bed where she lay sleeping. This was done for six days and six nights, and then the girl rose up suddenly and asked for food. They gave her to eat, but asked no questions, only watched her that she should not quit the house. Amid then she fixed her eyes on them steadily and said--

"Why did you bring me back? I was so happy. I was in a beautiful palace where lovely ladies and young princes were dancing to the sweetest music; and they made me dance with them, and threw a mantle over me of rich gold: and now it is all gone, and you have brought me back, and I shall never, never see the beautiful palace more."

Then the mother wept and said--

"Oh, child, stay with me, for I have no other daughter, and if the fairies take you from me I shall die."

When the girl heard this, she fell on her mother's neck and kissed her, and promised that she would never again go near the fairy rath while she lived, for the fairy doctor told her that if ever she lay down there again and slept, she would never return alive to her home any more.

FESTIVALS

Candlemas

CANDLEMAS day, the 2nd of February, used to be held in the old pagan times as a kind of saturnalia, with dances and torches and many unholy rites. But these gave occasion to so much ill conduct that in the ninth century the Pope abolished the festival, and substituted for it the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, when candles were lit in her honour. Hence the name of Candlemas.

Whitsuntide

Whitsuntide is a very fatal and unlucky time. Especially beware of water then, for there is an evil spirit in it, and no one should venture to bathe, nor to sail in a boat for fear of being drowned; nor to go a journey where water has to be crossed. And everything in the house must be sprinkled with holy water at Whitsuntide to keep away the fairies, who at that season are very active and malicious, and bewitch the cattle, and carry off the young children, and come up from the sea to hold strange midnight revels, when they kill with their fairy darts the unhappy mortal who crosses their path and pries at their mysteries.

Whitsuntide Legend Of The Fairy Horses

There was a widow woman with one son, who had a nice farm of her own close to a lake, and she took great pains in the cultivation of the land, and her corn was the best in the whole country. But when nearly ripe, and just fit for cutting, she found to her dismay that every night it was trampled down and cruelly damaged; yet no one could tell by what means it was done.

So she set her son to watch. And at midnight he heard a great noise and a rushing of waves on the beach, and up out of the lake came a great troop of horses, who began to graze the corn and trample it down madly with their hoofs.

When he told all this to his mother she bade him watch the next night also, but to take several of the men with him furnished with bridles, and when the horses rose from the lake they were to fling the bridles over as many as they could catch.

Now at midnight there was the same noise heard again, and the rush of the waves, and in an instant all the field was filled with the fairy horses, grazing the corn and trampling it down. The men pursued them, but only succeeded in capturing one, and he was the noblest of the lot. The rest all plunged back into the lake. However, the men brought home the captured horse to the widow, and he was put in the stable and grew big and strong, and never another horse came up out of the lake, nor was the corn touched after that night of his capture. But when a year had passed by the widow said it was a shame to keep so fine a horse idle, and she bade the young man, her son, take him out to the hunt that was held that day by all the great gentry of the country, for it was Whitsuntide.

And, in truth, the horse carried him splendidly at the hunt, and every one admired both the fine young rider and his steed. But as he was returning home, when they came within sight of the lake from which the fairy steed had risen, he began to plunge violently, and finally threw his

rider. And the young man's foot being unfortunately caught in the stirrup, he was dragged along till he was torn limb from limb, while the horse still continued galloping on madly to the water, leaving some fragment of the unhappy lad after him on the road, till they reached the margin of the lake, when the horse shook off the last limb of the dead youth from him, and plunging into the waves disappeared from sight.

The people reverently gathered up the remains of the dead, and erected a monument of stones over the lad in a field by the edge of the lake; and every one that passes by still lays a stone and says a prayer that the spirit of the dead may rest in peace.

The phantom horses were never seen again, but the lake has an evil reputation even to this day amongst the people; and no one would venture a boat on it after sundown at Whitsuntide, or during the time of the ripening of the corn, or when the harvest is ready for the sickle, for strange sounds are heard at night, like the wild galloping of a horse across the meadow, along with the cries as of a man in his death agony.

November Eve

ALL the spells worked on November Eve are performed in the name of the devil, who is then forced to reveal the future fate of the questioner. The most usual spell is to wash a garment in a running brook, then hang it on a thorn bush, and wait to see the apparition of the lover, who will come to turn at. But the tricks played on this night by young persons on each other have often most disastrous consequences. One young girl fell dead with fright when an apparition really came and turned the garment she had hung on the bush. And a lady narrates that on the 1st of November her servant rushed into the room and fainted on the floor. On recovering, she said that she had played a trick that night in the name of the devil before the looking-glass; but what she had seen she dared not speak of, though the remembrance of it would never leave her brain, and she knew the shock would kill her. They tried to laugh her out of her fears, but the next night she was found quite dead, with her features horribly contorted, lying on the floor before the looking-glass, which was shivered to pieces.

* * *

Another spell is the building of the house. Twelve couples are taken, each being made of two holly twigs tied together with a hempen thread: these are all named amid stuck round in a circle in the clay. A live coal is then placed in the centre, and whichever couple catches fire first will assuredly be married. Then the future husband is invoked in the name of the Evil One to appear and quench the flame.

On one occasion a dead man in his shroud answered the call, and silently drew away the girl from the rest of the party. The fright turned her brain, and she never recovered her reason afterwards. The horror of that apparition haunted her for ever, especially as on November Eve it is believed firmly that the dead really leave their graves and have power to appear amongst the living.

* * *

A young girl in a farmer's service was in the loft one night looking for eggs when two men came into the stable underneath, and through a chink in the boards she could see them quite well and hear all they said. To her horror she found that they were planning the murder of a man in the neighbourhood who was suspected of being an informer, and they settled how they would get rid of the body by throwing it into the Shannon. She crept home half dead with fright, but did not venture to tell any one what she had heard. Next day, however, the news spread that the maim was missing, and it was feared, he was murdered. Still the girl was afraid to reveal what she knew, though the ghost of the murdered man seemed for ever before her. Finally she could bear the place no longer, and, giving up her situation, she went to another village some miles off and took service. But on November Eve, as she was washing clothes in the Shannon, the dead body of the murdered man arose from the water and floated towards her, until it lay quite close to her feet. Then she knew the hand of God was in it, and that the spirit of the dead would not rest till he was avenged. So she went and gave information, and on her evidence the two murderers were convicted and executed.

* * *

If the cattle fall sick at thus season, it is supposed that some old fairy man or woman is lying hid about the place to spy out the doings of the family and work some evil spells.

A farmer had a splendid cow, the pride of his farm, but suddenly it seemed ailing and gave no milk, though every morning it went and stood quite patiently under an old hawthorn-tree as if some one were milking her. So the man watched the time, and presently the cow came of herself and stood under the hawthorn, when a little old wizened woman came forth from the trunk of the tree, milked the cow, and then retreated into the tree again. On this the farmer sent at once for a fairy doctor, who exorcised the cow and gave it a strong potion, after which the spell was broken and the cow was restored to its usual good condition and gave the milk as heretofore.

* * *

The fairies also exercise a malign influence by making a path through a house, when all the children begin to pine and a blight falls on the family.

A farmer who had lost one son by heart disease (always a mysterious malady to the peasants) and another by gradual decay, consulted a wise fairy woman as to what should be done, for his wife also had become delicate and weak. The woman told him that on November Eve the fairies had made a road through the house, and were going back and forward ever since, and whatever they looked upon was doomed. The only remedy was to build up the old door and open another entrance. This the man did, and when the witch-women came as usual in the morning to beg for water or milk or meal they found no door, and were obliged to turn back. After this the spell was taken off the household, and they all prospered without fear of the fairies.

A Terrible Revenge

THE fairies often take a terrible revenge if they are ever slighted or offended. A whole family once came under their ban because a fairy woman had been refused admittance into the house. The eldest boy lost his sight for some time, and though he recovered the use of his eyes yet they always had a strange expression, as if he saw some terrible object in the distance that scared him. And at last the neighbours grew afraid of the family, for they brought ill-luck wherever they went, and nothing prospered that they touched.

There were six children, all wizened little creatures with withered old faces and thin crooked fingers. Every one knew they were fairy changelings, and the smith wanted to put them on the anvil, and the wise women said they should be passed through the fire; but destiny settled the future for them, for one after another they all pined away and died, and the ban of the fairies was never lifted from the ill-fated house till the whole family lay in the grave.

Midsummer

The Baal Fires and Dances

THIS season is still made memorable in Ireland by lighting fires on every hill, according to the ancient pagan usage, when the Baal fires were kindled as part of the ritual of sun-worship, though now they are lit in honour of St.

John. The great bonfire of the year is still made on St. John's Eve, when all the people dance round it, and every young man takes a lighted brand from the pile to bring home with him for good luck to the house.

In ancient times the sacred fire was lighted with great ceremony on Midsummer Eve; and on that night all the people of the adjacent country kept fixed watch on the western promontory of Howth, and the moment the first flash was seen from that spot the fact of ignition was announced with wild cries and cheers repeated from village to village, when all the local fires began to blaze, and Ireland was circled by a cordon of flame rising up from every hill. Then the dance and song began round every fire, and the wild hurrahs filled the air with the most frantic revelry.

Many of these ancient customs are still continued, and the fires are still lighted on St. John's Eve on every hill in Ireland. When the fire has burned down to a red glow the young men strip to the waist and leap over or through the flames; this is done backwards and forwards several times, and he who braves the greatest blaze is considered the victor over the powers of evil, and is greeted with tremendous applause. When the fire burns still lower, the young girls leap the flame, and those who leap clean over three times back and forward will be certain of a speedy marriage and good luck in after life, with many children. The married women then walk through the lines of the burning embers; and when the fire is nearly burnt and trampled down, the yearling cattle are driven through the hot ashes, and their back is singed with a lighted hazel twig. These hazel rods are kept safely afterwards, being considered of immense power to drive the cattle to and from the watering places. As the fire diminishes the shouting grows fainter, and the song and the dance commence; while professional story-tellers narrate tales of fairy-land, or of the good old times long ago, when the kings and princes of Ireland dwelt amongst their own people, and there was food to eat and wine to drink for all corners to the feast at the king's house. When the crowd at length separate, every one carries home a brand from the fire, and great virtue is attached to the lighted *brone* which is safely carried to the house without breaking or falling to the ground. Many contests also arise amongst the young men; for whoever enters his house first with the sacred fire brings the good luck of the year with him.

On the first Sunday in Midsummer all the young people used to stand in lines after leaving chapel, to be hired for service--the girls holding white hands, the young men each with an emblem of his trade. The evening ended with a dance and the revelry was kept up until the dawn of the next day, called "Sorrowful Monday," because of the end of the pleasure and the frolic.

SUPERSTITIONS

THE two great festivals of the ancient Irish were *Lá Baal Tinné*, or May Day (sacred to the Sun), and *Lá Samnah*, or November Eve (sacred to time Moon).

Food should be left out on November Eve for the dead, who are then wandering about. If the food disappears, it is a sign that the spirits have taken it, for no mortal would dare to touch or eat of the food so left.

Never turn your head to look if you fancy you hear footsteps behind you on that night; for the dead are walking then, and their glance would kill.

In November a distaff is placed under time head of a young man at night to make him dream of the girl he is destined to marry.

If a ball of worsted is thrown into a lime-kiln and wound up till the end is caught by invisible hands, the person who winds it calls out, "Who holds the ball?" and the answer will be the name of the future husband or wife. But the experiment must be made only at midnight, and in silence and alone.

Whitsuntide is a most unlucky time; horses foaled then will grow up dangerous and kill some one.

A child born at Whitsuntide will have an evil temper, and may commit a murder.

Beware also of water at Whitsuntide, for an evil power is on the waves and the lakes and the rivers, and a boat may be swamped and men drowned unless a bride steers; then the danger ceases.

To turn away ill-luck from a child born at that time, a grave must be dug and the infant laid in it for a few minutes. After this process the evil spell is broken, and the child is safe.

If any one takes ill at Whitsuntide there is great danger of death, for the evil spirits are on the watch to carry off victims, and no sick person should be left alone at this time, nor in time dark. Light is a great safeguard, as well as fire, against malific influences.

In old times at Whitsuntide blood was poured out as a libation, to the evil spirits; and the children and cattle were passed through two lines of fire.

On May morning the Skellig rocks go out full sail to meet the opposite rocks, which advance half way to meet them, and then slowly retire like retreating ships.

At Midsummer the fairies try to pass round the Baal fires in a whirlwind in order to extinguish them, but the spirits may be kept off by throwing fire at them. Then the young men are free to leap over the burning embers and to drive the cattle through the flames, while coals of fire must also be passed three times over and three times under the body of each animal.

Foot-worship was a homage to Buddha, and it was also a Christian ceremony to wash the feet of time saints. The Irish had many superstitions

about foot-water, and no woman was allowed to wash her feet in the sacred wells though the lavation was permitted to men.

If a child is fairy-struck, give it a cup of cold water in the name of Christ and make the sign of the cross over it.

On St. Martin's Day when blood is spilt, whoever is signed with the blood is safe, for that year at least, from disease.

For the Evil Eye, a piece cut from the garment of the evil-eyed, burned to tinder and ground to powder, must be given to the person under the baneful spell, while his forehead is anointed with spittle thrice. So the Greeks spat three times in the face of the evil-eyed to break the spell.

Pass a red-hot turf three times over and under the body of an animal supposed to be fairy-struck, singeing the hair along the back. This drives off the fairies.

The Irish always went westward round a holy well, following the course of the sun, and creeping on their hands and knees. So did the ancient Persians when offering homage at the sacred fountains.

Red-haired people were held to be evil and malicious and unlucky, probably because Typhon, the evil principle, was red; and therefore a red heifer was sacrificed to him by the Egyptians.

In the mystic, or snake dance, performed at the Baal festival, the gyrations of the dancers were always westward, in the track of the sun, for the dance was part of the ancient ritual of sun worship.

THE POWER OF THE WORD

The belief in the malific influence of the Evil Eye pervades all the Greek islands, and the same preventive measures are used as in Ireland. An old woman is employed to spit three times at the person affected, if she is a person learned in the mysteries and accounted wise. Salt and fire are also used as safeguards, precisely as the Irish peasant employs them to guard his cattle and children from the evil influence. But no superstition is more widely spread; it seems to pervade all the world, and to be instinctive to humanity. The educated are as susceptible to it as the illiterate, and no nerves are strong enough, apparently, to resist the impression made by an envious, malicious glance, for a poison that blights and withers seems to emanate from it. Reason appeals in vain; the feelings cannot be overcome that the presence and glance of some one person in a room can chill all the natural flow of spirits, while the presence of another seems to intensify all our mental powers, and transform us for the moment into a higher being.

But a malific power, stronger even than the glance of the Evil Eye, was exercised by the Bards of Erin: whom they would they blessed, but whom they would they also banned; and the poet's malison was more dreaded amid was more fatal than any other form of imprecation--for the bard had

the mystic prophet power: he could foresee, and he could denounce. And no man could escape from the judgment pronounced by a poet over one he desired to injure; for the poet had the knowledge of all mysteries and was Lord over the secrets of life by the power of The Word. Therefore poets were emphatically called the tribe of *Duars*, that is, THE MEN OF THE WORD; for by a word the poets could produce deformities in those they disliked, and make them objects of scorn and hateful in the sight of other men.

FAIRY NATURE

THE *Siodh-Dune*, or the Mount of Peace, is a favourite resort of the fairies. It is an ancient, sacred place, where the Druids in old time used to retire to pray, when they desired solitude: and the fairies meet there every seven years to perform the act of lamentation and mourning for having been cast out of heaven.

Earth, lake, and hill are peopled by these fantastic, beautiful gods of earth; the wilful, capricious child-spirits of the world. The Irish seem to have created this strange fairy race after their own image, for in all things they strangely resemble true Irish character.

The Sidhe passionately love beauty and luxury, and hold in contempt all the mean virtues of thrift, and economy. Above all things they hate the close, niggard hand that gathers the last grain, and drains the last drop in the milk-pail, and plucks the trees bare of fruit, leaving nothing for time spirits who wander by in the moonlight. They like food and wine to be left for them at night, yet they are very temperate; no one ever saw an intoxicated fairy.

But people should not sit up too late; for time fairies like to gather round the smouldering embers after the family are in bed, and drain the wine-cup, and drink the milk which a good house-wife always leaves for them, in case the fairies should come in and want their supper. A vessel of pure water should also be left for them to bathe in, if they like. And in all things the fairies are fond of being made much of, and flattered and attended to; and the fairy blessing will come back in return to the giver for what-ever act of kindness he has done to the spirits of the hill and the cave. Some unexpected good fortune or stroke of luck will come upon his house or his children; for the fairy race is not ungrateful, and is powerful over man both for good and evil.

Therefore be kind to the wayfarer, for he may be a fairy prince in disguise, who has come to test the depth of your charity, and of the generous nature that can give liberally out of pure love and kindness to those who are in need, and not in hope of a reward.

If treated well, the fairies will discover the hidden pot of gold, and reveal the mysteries of herbs, and give knowledge to the fairy women of the mystic spells that can cure disease, and save life, and make the lover loved.

All they ask in return is to be left in quiet possession of the rath and the hill and the ancient hawthorn trees that have been theirs from time immemorial, and where they lead a joyous life with music and dance, and charming little suppers of the nectar of flowers, down in the crystal caves, lit by the diamonds that stud the rocks.

But some small courtesies they require. Never drain your wine-glass at a feast, nor the potten flask, nor the milk-pail; and never rake out all the fire at night, it looks mean, and the fairies like a little of everything going, and to have the hearth comfortable and warm when they come in to hold a council after all the mortal people have gone to bed. In fact, the fairies are born aristocrats, true ladies and gentlemen, and if treated with proper respect are never in time least malignant or ill-natured.

All the traditions of the fairies show that they love beauty and splendour, grace of movement, music and pleasure; everything, in fact, that is artistic, in contradistinction to violent, brutal enjoyment. Only an Aryan people, therefore, could have invented the Sidhe race.

LEGENDS OF ANIMALS

THERE are no traces in Irish legend of animal worship, but many concerning the influence of animals upon human life, and of their interference with human affairs.

The peasants believe that the domestic animals know all about us, especially the dog and the cat. They listen to everything that is said; they watch the expression of the face, and can even read the thoughts. The Irish say it is not safe to ask a question of a dog, for he may answer, and should he do so the questioner will surely die.

The position of the animal race in the life scheme is certainly full of mystery. Gifted with extraordinary intelligence, yet with dumb souls vainly struggling for utterance, they seem like prisoned spirits in bondage, suffering the punishment, perhaps, for sin in some former human life, and now waiting the completion of the cycle of expiation that will advance them again to the human state.

The three most ancient words in the Irish language are, it is said, *Tor*, a tower; *Cu*, a hound, and *Bo*, a cow. The latter word is the same as is found in the Greek *Bosporus*, and in the nomenclature of many places throughout Europe.

CONCERNING DOGS

SOME very weird superstitions exist in Ireland concerning the howlings of dogs. If a dog is heard to howl near the house of a sick person, all hope of his recovery is given up, and the patient himself sinks into despair, knowing that his doom is sealed. But the Irish are not alone in holding this superstition. The Egyptians, Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans all looked on the howling of the dog as ominous. The very word *howling* may be traced in the Latin *ululu*, the Greek *holuluzo*, the hebrew *hululue*, and the Irish *ulluloo*. In Ireland the cry raised at the funeral ceremony was called the *Caoin*, or keen, probably from *χων*, a dog. And this doleful lamentation was also common to other nations of antiquity. The Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans had their hired mourners, who, with dishevelled hair and mournful cadenced hymns, led on the melancholy parade of death. Thus the Trojan women keened over Hector, the chorus being led by the beautiful Helen herself.

The howling of the dog was considered by these nations as the first note of the funeral dirge and the signal that the coming of death was near.

But the origin of the superstition may be traced back to Egypt, where dogs and dog-faced gods were objects of worship; probably because Sirius, the Dog-star, appeared precisely before the rising of the Nile, and thereby gave the people a mystic and supernatural warning to prepare for the overflow.

The Romans held that the howling of dogs was a fatal presage of evil, and it is noted amongst the direful omens that preceded the death of Caesar. Horace also says that Canidia by her spells and sorceries could bring ghosts of dogs from hell; and Virgil makes the dog to howl at the approach of Hecate.

It is remarkable that when dogs see spirits (and they are keenly sensitive to spirit influence) they never bark, but only growl. The Rabbins say that "when the Angel of Death enters a city the dogs do howl. But when Elias appears then the dogs rejoice and are merry." And Rabbi Jehuda the Just states, that once upon a time when the Angel of Death entered a house the dog howled and fled; but being presently brought back he lay down in fear and trembling, and so died.

This strange superstition concerning the howling of dogs, when, as is supposed, they are conscious of the approach of the Spirit of Death, and see him though he is shrouded and invisible to human eyes, may be found pervading the legends of all nations from the earliest period down to the present time; for it still exists in full force amongst all classes, the educated, as well as the unlettered peasantry; and to this day the howling of a dog where a sick person is lying is regarded in Ireland in all grades of society with pale dismay as a certain sign of approaching death.

The Irish may have obtained the superstition through Egypt, Phoenicia, or Greece, for it is the opinion of some erudite writers that the Irish wolf-dog (*Canis gracios Hibernicus*) was descended from the dogs of Greece.

It is strange and noteworthy that although the dog is so faithful to man, yet it is never mentioned in the Bible without an expression of contempt; and Moses in his code of laws makes the dog an unclean animal, probably to deter the Israelites from the Egyptian worship of this animal. It was the lowest term of offence--"Is thy servant a dog?" False teachers, persecutors, Gentiles, unholy men, and others sunk in sin and vileness were called dogs; while at the same time the strange prophetic power of these animals was universally acknowledged and recognized.

The Romans sacrificed a dog at the Lupercalia in February. And to meet a dog with her whelps was considered in the highest degree unlucky. Of all living creatures the name of "dog" applied to any one expressed the lowest form of insult, contempt, and reproach. Yet, of all animals, the dog has the noblest qualities, the highest intelligence, and the most enduring affection for man.

The word hound entered into many combinations as a name for various animals. Thus the rabbit was called, "the hound of the brake;" the hare was the "brown hound;" the moth was called "the hound of fur," owing to the voracity with which it devoured raiment. And the otter is still called by the Irish *Madradh-Uisgue* (the dog of the water).

The names of most creatures of the animal kingdom were primitive, the result evidently of observation. Thus the hedgehog was named "the ugly little fellow." The ant was the "slender one." The trout, *Breac*, or "the spotted," from the skin. And the wren was called "the Druid bird," because if any one understood the chirrup, they would have a knowledge of coming events as foretold by the bird.

CONCERNING CATS

CATS have been familiar to the human household from all antiquity, but they were probably first domesticated in Egypt, where, so far back as two thousand years ago, a temple was dedicated to the goddess of cats--Bubastis Pasht--represented with a cat's head. The Greeks had this feline pet of the house from Egypt, and from Greece the cat race, such as we have it now, was disseminated over Europe. It was a familiar element in Greek household life, and if anything was broken, according to Aristophanes, the phrase went then as now, "The cat did it." But cats were never venerated in Greece with religious adoration as in Egypt, the only country that gave them Divine honour, and where, if a cat died, the whole family shaved off their eyebrows in token of mourning.

The Irish have always looked on cats as evil and mysteriously connected with some demoniacal influence. On entering a house the usual salutation is, "God save all here, except the cat." Even the cake on the griddle may be blessed, but no one says, "God bless the cat."

It is believed that the devil often assumes the form of these animals. The familiar of a witch is always a black cat; and it is supposed that black cats have powers and faculties quite different from all other of the feline tribe. They are endowed with reason, can understand conversations, and are quite able to talk if they considered it advisable and judicious to join in the conversation. Their temperament is exceedingly unamiable, they are artful, malignant, and skilled in deception, and people should be very cautious in caressing them, for they have the venomous heart and the evil eye, and are ever ready to do an injury. Yet the liver of a black cat has the singular power to excite love when properly administered. If ground to powder and infused into potion, the recipient is fated to love passionately the person who offers it and has worked the charm.

An instance of this is narrated as having happened not very long ago. A farmer's daughter, a pretty coquette, attracted the attention of the young squire of the place. But though he was willing to carry on a flirtation, the young gentleman had no idea of debasing his proud lineage by an alliance. Yet a marriage was exactly what the girl desired, and which she was determined to accomplish. So she and a friend, an accomplice, searched the village till they found a black cat, black as night, with only three white hairs on the breast. Him they seized, and having tied up the animal in a bag, they proceeded to throw him from one to the other over a low wall, till the poor beast was quite dead. Then at midnight they began their unholy work. The liver and heart were extracted in the name of the Evil One, and then boiled down until they became so dry that they could easily be reduced to a powder, which was kept for use when opportunity offered. This soon came; the young squire arrived one evening as usual, to pay a visit to the pretty Nora, and began to make love to the girl with the ordinary amount of audacity and hypocrisy. But Nora had other views, so she made the tea by her little fire in a *black* teapot, for this was indispensable, and induced her lover to stay and partake of it with her, along with a fresh griddle cake. Then cunningly she infused the powder into his cup and watched him as he drank the tea with feverish anxiety. The result was even beyond her hopes. A violent and ardent passion seemed suddenly to have seized the young man, and he not only made earnest love to the pretty Nora, but offered her his hand in marriage, vowing that he would kill himself if she refused to become his lawful bride. To avoid such a catastrophe, Nora gently yielded to his request, and from that evening they were engaged. Daily visits followed from the young squire, and each time that he came Nora took care to repeat the charm of the love powder, so that the love was kept at fever heat, and finally the wedding day was fixed.

The family of the young squire were, however, not quite contented, especially as rumours of witchcraft and devil's dealings were bruited about the neighbourhood. And on the very eve of the marriage, just as the young man was pouring forth his vows of eternal love to the bride expectant, the door was burst open, and a body of men entered, headed by the nearest relations of the squire, who proceeded at once to belabour the young bridegroom with hazel sticks in the most vigorous manner. In vain the bride tried to interpose. She only drew the blows on herself, and finally the young man was carried away half stunned, lifted into the carriage and driven straight home, where he was locked up in his own room, and not allowed to hold any communication with the bride elect.

The daily doses of the powder having thus ceased, he began to recover from the love madness, and finally the fever passed away. And he looked back with wonder and horror on the fatal step he had so nearly taken. Now he saw there was really witchcraft in it, which the power of the hazel twigs had completely broken. And the accomplice having confessed the sorcery practised on him by Nora and herself, he hated the girl henceforth as much as he had once loved her.

And after a little he went away on foreign travel, and remained abroad for three years. When he returned, he found that Nora had degenerated into a withered little witch-faced creature, who was shunned by every one, and jeered at for the failure of her wicked spells, which had all come to nothing, though she had the Evil One himself to aid her; for such is the fate of all who deal in sorcery and devil's magic, especially with the help of Satan's chief instrument of witchcraft--the black cat.

But there is a certain herb of more power even than the cat's liver to produce love. Though what this herb is, only the adept knows and can reveal. The influence it exercises lasts, it is said, for twenty-one years, and then ceases and cannot be renewed.

A gentleman, now living, once ate of this herb, which was given to him by his wife's serving-maid, and in consequence he was fated to love the girl for the specified time. Not being then able to endure his wife's presence, he sent her away from the house, and devoted himself exclusively to the servant. Nineteen years have now passed by, and the poor lady is still waiting patiently to the end of the twenty-one years, believing that the witch-spell will then cease, and that her husband's love will be hers once more. For already he has been inquiring after her and his children, and has been heard lamenting the madness that forced him to drive them from the house for the sake of the menial, who usurped his wife's place by means of some wicked sorcery which he had no power to resist.

THE KING OF THE CATS

A most important personage in feline history is the King of the Cats. He may be in your house a common looking fellow enough, with no distinguishing mark of exalted rank about him, so that it is very difficult to verify his genuine claims to royalty. Therefore the best way is to cut off a tiny little bit of his ear. If he is really the royal personage, he will immediately speak out and declare who he is; and perhaps, at the same time, tell you some very disagreeable truths about yourself, not at all pleasant to have discussed by the house cat.

A man once, in a fit of passion, cut off the head of the domestic pussy, and threw it on the fire. On which the head exclaimed, in a fierce voice, "Go tell your wife that you have cut off the head of the King of the Cats; but wait! I shall come back and be avenged for this insult," and the eyes of the cat glared at him horribly from the fire.

And so it happened; for that day year, while the master of the house was playing with a pet kitten, it suddenly flew at his throat and bit him so severely that he died soon after.

A story is current also, that one night an old woman was sitting up very late spinning, when a knocking came to the door. "Who is there?" she asked. No answer; but still the knocking went on. "Who is there?" she asked a second time. No answer; and the knocking continued. "Who is there?" she asked the third time, in a very angry passion.

Then there came a small voice--"Ah, Judy, agra, let me in,--for I am cold and hungry; open the door, Judy, agra, and let me sit by the fire, for the night is cold out here. Judy, agra, let me in, let me in!"

The heart of Judy was touched, for she thought it was some small child that had lost its way, and she rose up from her spinning, and went and opened the door--when in walked a large black cat with a white breast, and two white kittens after her.

They all made over to the fire and began to warm and dry themselves, purring all the time very loudly; but Judy said never a word, only went on spinning.

Then the black cat spoke at last--"Judy, agra, don't stay up so late again, for the fairies wanted to hold a council here tonight, and to have some supper, but you have prevented them; so they were very angry and determined to kill you, and only for myself and my two daughters here you would be dead by this time. So take my advice, don't interfere with the fairy hours again, for the night is theirs, and they hate to look on the face of a mortal when they are out for pleasure or business. So I ran on to tell you, and now give me a drink of milk, for I must be off."

And after the milk was finished the cat stood up, and called her daughters to come away.

"Good-night, Judy, agraah," she said. "You have been very civil to me, and I'll not forget it to you. Good-night, good night."

With that the black cat and the two kittens whisked up the chimney; but Judy looking down saw something glittering on the hearth, and taking it up she found it was a piece of silver, more than she ever could make in a month by her spinning, and she was glad in her heart, and never again sat up so late to interfere with the fairy hours, but the black cat and her daughters came no more again to the house.

THE DEMON CAT

The cat of the foregoing legend had evidently charming manners, and was well intentioned; but there are other cats of evil and wicked ways, that are, in fact, demons or witches, who assume the cat-form, in order to get easy entrance to a house, and spy over everything.

There was a woman in Connemara, the wife of a fisherman, and as he always had very good luck, she had plenty of fish at all times stored away in the house ready for market. But to her great annoyance she found that a great cat used to come in at night and devour all the best and finest fish. So she kept a big stick by her and determined to watch.

One day, as she and a woman were spinning together, the house suddenly became quite dark; and the door was burst open as if by the blast of the tempest, 'when in walked a huge black cat, who went straight. up to the fire, then turned round and growled at them.

"Why, surely this is the devil!" said a young girl, who was by, sorting the fish.

"I'll teach you how to call me names," said the cat; and, jumping at her, he scratched her arm till the blood came. "There now," he said, "you will be more civil another the when a gentleman comes to see you." And with that he walked over to the door and shut it close to prevent any of them going out, for the poor young girl, while crying loudly from fright and pain, had made a desperate rush to get away.

Just then a man was going by, and hearing the cries he pushed open the door and tried to get in, but the cat stood on the threshold and would let no one pass. On this, the man attacked him with his stick, and gave him a sound blow; the cat, however, was more than his match in the fight, for it flew at him and tore his face and hands so badly that the man at last took to his heels and ran away as fast as he could.

"Now it's time for my dinner," said the cat, going up to examine the fish that was laid out on the tables. "I hope the fish is good to-day. Now don't disturb me, nor make a fuss; I can help myself." With that he jumped up and began to devour all the best fish, while he growled at the woman.

"Away, out of this, you wicked beast!" she cried, giving it a blow with the tongs that would have broken its back, only it was a devil; "out of this! No fish shall you have today."

But the cat only grinned at her, and went on tearing and spoiling and devouring the fish, evidently not a bit the worse for the blow. On this, both the women attacked it with sticks, and struck hard blows enough to kill it, on which the cat glared at them, and spit fire; then making a leap, it tore their hands and arms till the blood came, and the frightened women rushed shrieking from the house.

But presently the mistress returned, carrying with her a bottle of holy water; and looking in, she saw the cat still devouring the fish, and not minding. So she crept over quietly and threw the holy water on it without a word. 'No sooner was this done than

a dense black smoke filled the place, through which nothing was seen but the two red eyes of the cat, burning like coals of fire. Then the smoke gradually cleared away, and she saw the body of the creature burning slowly till it became shrivelled and black like a cinder, and finally disappeared. And from that the fish remained untouched and safe from harm, for the power of the Evil One was broken, and the demon cat was seen no more.

* * *

Cats are very revengeful, and one should be very careful not to offend them. A lady was in the habit of feeding the cat from her own table at dinner, and no doubt giving it choice morsels; but one day there was a dinner party, and pussy was quite forgotten. So she sulked and plotted revenge; and that night, after the lady was in bed, the cat, who had hid herself in the room, sprang at the throat of her friend and mistress, and bit her so severely that in a week the lady died of virulent blood poisoning.

*Yet it is singular that the blood of the black cat is esteemed of wonderful power when mixed with herbs, for charms; and also of great efficacy in potions for the cure of disease; but three drops of f-he blood are sufficient, and it is generally obtained by nipping off a small piece of the tail.

CAT NATURE

The observation of cats is very remarkable, and also their intense curiosity. They examine everything in a house, and in a short time know all about it as well as the owner. They are never deceived by stuffed birds, or any such weak human delusions. They fathom it all at one glance, and then turn away with apathetic indifference, as if saying, in cat language--" We know all about it."

A favourite cat in a gentleman's house was rather fond of nocturnal rambles and late hours, perhaps copying his master, but no matter what his engagements were the cat always returned regularly next morning precisely at nine o'clock, which was the breakfast hour, and *rang the house bell* at the hall door. This fact was stated to me on undoubted authority; and, in truth, there is nothing too wonderful to believe about the intellect of cats; no matter what strange things may be narrated of them, nothing should be held improbable or impossible to their intelligence.

But cats are decidedly malific; they are selfish, revengeful, treacherous, cunning, and generally dangerous. The evil spirit in them is easily aroused. It is an Irish superstition that if you are going a journey, and meet a cat, you should turn back. But the cat must meet you on the road, not simply be in the house; and it must look you full in the face. Then cross yourself and turn back; for a witch or a devil is in your path.

It is believed also that if a black cat is killed and a bean placed in the heart, and the animal afterwards buried, the beans that grow from that seed will confer extraordinary power; for if a man places one in his mouth, he will become invisible, and can go anywhere he likes without being seen.

Cats have truly something awful in them. According to this popular belief they know everything that is said, and can take various shapes through their demoniac power. A cat once lived in a farmer's family for many years, and understood both Irish and English perfectly. Then the family grew afraid of it, for they said it would certainly talk some day. So the farmer put it into a bag, determined to get rid of it on the mountains. But on the way he met a pack of hounds, and the dogs smelt at the bag and dragged it open, on which the cat jumped out; but the hounds were on it in a moment, and tore the poor animal to pieces. However, before her death she had the to say to the farmer in very good Irish--"It is well for you that I must die today, for had I lived I meant to have killed you this very night." These were the last dying words of the cat uttered in her death agonies, before the face of many credible witnesses, so there can be no doubt on the matter.

Cats were special objects of mysterious dread to the ancient Irish. They believed that many of them were men and women metamorphosed into cats by demoniacal power. Cats also were the guardians of hidden treasure, and had often great battles among themselves on account of the hidden gold; when a demon, in the shape of the chief cat, led on the opposing forces on each side, and compelled all the cats in the district to take part in the conflict.

The Druidical or royal cat, the chief monarch of all the cats in Ireland, was endowed with human speech and faculties, and possessed great and singular privileges. "A slender black cat, wearing a chain of silver," so it is described.

There is a legend that a beautiful princess, a king's daughter, having gone down to bathe one day, was there enchanted by her wicked stepmother, who hated her; and by the spell of the enchantment she was doomed to be one year a cat, another a swan, and another an otter; but with the privilege of assuming her natural shape one day in each year, under certain conditions. It is to be regretted that we have no account as to the mode in which the Princess Faithlean exercised her brief enjoyment of human rights; for the narration would have had a mystic and deep psychological interest if the fair young victim had only retained during all her transformations the memory of each of her successive incarnations as the cat, the swan, and the otter.

This abnormal mode of existence, however, was not unusual amongst the Irish. Fionn himself had a wife who for seven years was alive by day and dead by night; and the Irish Princess Zeba, being enchanted by her wicked stepfather, the king of Munster, died and came to life again each alternate year.

All nations seem to have appreciated the mysterious amid almost human qualities of cat nature; the profound cunning, the impertinent indifference, the intense selfishness, yet capable of the most hypocritical flatteries when some point has to be gained. Their traits are not merely the product of brute instinct with unvarying action and results, but the manifestation of a calculating intellect, akin to the human. Then their grace and flexile beauty make them very attractive; while the motherly virtues of the matron cat are singularly interesting as a study of order, education, and training for the wilful little kitten, quite on the human lines of salutary discipline. Humboldt declared that he could spend a whole day with immense profit and advantage to himself as a philosopher, by merely watching a cat with her kittens, the profound wisdom of the mother and the incomparable grace of the children. For cats are thoroughly well-bred, born aristocrats; never abrupt, fussy, or obtrusive like the dog, but gentle, grave, and dignified in manner. Cats never run, they glide softly, and always with perfect and beautiful curves of motion; and they express their affection, not violently, like the dog, but with the most graceful, caressing movements of the head.

Their intellect also is very remarkable; they easily acquire the meaning of certain words, and have a singular and exact knowledge of hours.

Mr. St. George Mivart, in Imis interesting and exhaustive work on cats, has devoted a whole chapter to the psychology of the cat; in which he shows that the race possesses evident mental qualities and peculiar intelligence, with also a decided and significant language of sounds and gestures to express the emotions of the cat mind. The highly reflective and observant nature of the cat is also admirably described in that very clever novel called "The Poison Tree," recently translated from the Bengalee. There the house-cat is drawn with the most lifelike touches, as she sits watching the noble and beautiful lady at work on her embroidery, while her little child is

playing beside her with all the pretty toys scattered over the carpet: "The cat's disposition was grave: her face indicated much wisdom, and a heart devoid of fickleness. She evidently was thinking--' the condition of human creatures is frightful; their minds are ever given to sewing of canvas, playing with dolls, or some such silly employment; their thoughts are not turned to good works, such as providing suitable food for cats. What will become of them hereafter!" Then, seeing no means by which the disposition of mankind could be improved, the cat, heaving a sigh, slowly departs."

THE DEAD HAND

WITCHCRAFT is sometimes practised by the people to produce butter in the churn, the most efficacious being to stir the milk round with the hand of a dead man, newly taken from the churchyard; but whoever is suspected of this practice is looked upon with great horror and dread by the neighbours.

A woman of the mainland got married to a fine young fellow of one of the islands. She was a tall, dark woman who seldom spoke, and kept herself very close and reserved from every one. But she minded her business; for she had always more butter to bring to market than any one else, and could therefore undersell the other farmers' wives. Then strange rumours got about concerning her, and the people began to whisper among themselves that something was wrong, and that there was witchcraft in it, especially as it was known that whenever she churned she went into an inner room off the kitchen, shut the door close, and would allow no one to enter. So they determined to watch and find out the secret, and one day a girl from the neighbourhood, when the woman was out, got in through a window and hid herself under the bed, waiting there patiently till the churning began.

At last in came the woman, and having carefully closed the door began her work with the milk, churning in the usual way without any strange doings that might seem to have magic in them. But presently she stopped, and going over to a box unlocked it, and from this receptacle, to the girl's horror, she drew forth the hand of a dead man, with which she stirred the milk round and round several times, going down on her knees and muttering an incantation all the while.

Seven times she stirred the milk with the dead hand, and seven times she went round the churn on her knees muttering some strange charm. After this she rose up and began to gather the butter from the churn with the dead hand, filling a pail with as much butter as the milk of ten cows. When the pail was quite full she dipped the dead hand three times in the milk, then dried it and put it back again in the box.

The girl, as soon as she could get away unperceived, fled in horror from the room, and spread the news amongst the people. At once a crowd gathered round the house with angry cries and threats to break open the door to search for the dead hand.

At last the woman appeared calm and cold as usual, and told them they were taking a deal of trouble about nothing, for there was no dead hand in the house. However, the people rushed in and searched, but all they saw was a huge fire on the hearth, though the smell of burning flesh was distinctly perceptible, and by this they knew that she had burnt the dead hand. Yet this did not save her from the vengeance of the neighbours. She was shunned by every one; no one would eat with her, or drink with her, or talk to her, and after a while she and her husband quitted the island and were never more heard of.

However, after she left and the butter was brought to the market, all the people had their fair and equal rights again, of which the wicked witchcraft of the woman had defrauded them for so long, and there was great rejoicing in the island over the fall and punishment of the wicked witch of the dead hand.

CONCERNING BIRDS

IN all countries superstitions of good or evil are attached to certain birds. The raven, for instance, has a wide-world reputation as the harbinger of evil and ill-luck. The wild geese portend a severe winter; the robin is held sacred, for no one would think of harming a bird who bears on his breast the blessed mark of the blood of Christ; while the wren is hunted to death with intense and cruel hate on St. Stephen's Day.

THE MAGPIE

There is no Irish name for the Magpie. It is generally called *Francaigh*, a Frenchman, though no one knows why. Many queer tales are narrated of this bird, arising from its quaint ways, its adroit cunning and habits of petty larceny. Its influence is not considered evil, though to meet one alone in the morning when going a journey is an ill omen, but to meet more than one magpie betokens good fortune, according to the old rhyme which runs thus—

"One for Sorrow,
Two for Mirth,
Three for Marriage,
Four for a Birth."

THE WREN

The wren is mortally hated by the Irish; for on one occasion, when the Irish troops were approaching to attack a portion of Cromwell's army, the wrens came and perched on the Irish drums, and by their tapping and noise aroused the English soldiers, who fell on the Irish troops and killed them all. So ever since the Irish hunt the wren on St. Stephen's Day, and teach their children to run it through with thorns and kill it whenever it can be caught. A dead wren was also tied to a pole and carried from house to house by boys, who demanded money; if nothing was given the wren was buried on the door-step, which was considered a great insult to the family and a degradation.

THE RAVEN AND WATER WAGTAIL

If ravens come cawing about a house it is a sure sign of death, for the raven is Satan's own bird; so also is the water wagtail, yet beware of killing it, for it has three drops of the devil's blood in its little body, and ill-luck ever goes with it, and follows it.

THE CUCKOO AND ROBIN REDBREAST

It is very unlucky to kill the cuckoo or break its eggs, for it brings fine weather; but most unlucky of all things is to kill the robin redbreast. The robin is God's own bird, sacred and holy, and held in the greatest veneration because of the beautiful tradition current amongst the people, that it was the robin plucked out the sharpest thorn that was piercing Christ's brow on the cross; and in so doing the breast of the bird was dyed red with the Saviour's blood, and so has remained ever since a sacred and blessed sign to preserve the robin from harm and make it beloved of all men.

CONCERNING LIVING CREATURES

THE CRICKET

THE crickets are believed to be enchanted. People do not like to express an exact opinion about them, so they are spoken of with great mystery and awe, and no one would venture to kill them for the whole world. But they are by no means evil; on the contrary, the presence of the cricket is

considered lucky, and their singing keeps away the fairies at night, who are always anxious, in their selfish way, to have the whole hearth left clear for themselves, that they may sit round the last embers of the fire, and drink the cup of milk left for them by the farmer's wife, in peace and quietness. The crickets are supposed to be hundreds of years old, and their talk, could we understand it, would no doubt be most interesting and instructive.

THE BEETLE

The beetle is not killed by the people for the following reason: they have a tradition that one day the chief priests sent messengers in every direction to look for the Lord Jesus, and they came to a field where a man was reaping, and asked him--

"Did Jesus of Nazareth pass this way?"

"No," said the man, "I have not seen him."

"But I know better," said a little clock running up, "for He was here to-day and rested, and has not long gone away."

"That is false," said a great big black beetle, coming forward; "He has not passed since yesterday, and you will never find Him on this road; try another."

So the people kill the clock because he tried to betray Christ; but they spare the beetle and will not touch him, because he saved the Lord on that day.

THE HARE

Hares are considered unlucky, as the witches constantly assume their form in order to gain entrance to a field where they can bewitch the cattle. A man once fired at a hare he met in the early morning, and having wounded it, followed the track of the blood till it disappeared within a cabin. On entering he found Nancy Molony, the greatest witch in all the county, sitting by the fire, groaning and holding her side. And then the man knew that she had been out in the form of a hare, and he rejoiced over her discomfiture.

Still it is not lucky to kill a hare before sunrise, even when it crosses your path; but should it cross *three* times, then turn back, for danger is on the road before you.

A tailor one time returning home very late at night from a wake, or better, very early in the morning, saw a hare sitting on the path before him, and not inclin&1 to run away. As he approached, with his stick raised to strike her, he distinctly heard a voice saying, "Don't kill it." However, he struck the hare three times, and each time heard the voice say, "Don't kill it."

But the last blow knocked the poor hare quite dead and immediately a great big weasel sat up, and began to spit at him. This greatly frightened the tailor who, however, grabbed the hare, and ran off as fast as he could. Seeing him look so pale and frightened, his wife asked the cause, on which he told her the whole story; and they both knew he had done wrong, and offended some powerful witch, who would be avenged. However, they dug a grave for the hare and buried it; for they were afraid to eat it, and thought that now perhaps the danger was over. But next day the man became suddenly speechless, and died off before the seventh day was over, without a word evermore passing his lips; and then all the neighbours knew that the witch-woman had taken her revenge.

THE WEASEL

Weasels are spiteful and malignant, and old withered witches sometimes take this form. It is extremely unlucky to meet a weasel the first thing in the morning; still it would be hazardous to kill it, for it might be a witch and take revenge. Indeed one should be very cautious about killing a weasel at any time, for all the other weasels will resent your audacity, and kill your chickens when an opportunity offers. The only remedy is to kill one chicken yourself, make the sign of the cross solemnly three times over it., then tie it to a stick hung up in the yard, and the weasels will have no more power for evil, nor the witches who take their form, at least during the year, if the stick is left standing; but the chicken may be eaten when the sun goes down.

* * *

A goose is killed on St. Michael's Day because the son of a king, being then at a feast, was choked by the bone of a goose; but was restored by St. Patrick. Hence the king ordered a goose to be sacrificed every year on the anniversary of the day to commemorate the event, and in honour of St. Michael.

A fowl is killed on St. Martin's Day, and the blood sprinkled on the house. In Germany a black cock is substituted.

A crowing hen, a whistling girl, and a black cat, are considered most unlucky. Beware of them in a house.

If a cock comes on the threshold and crows, you may expect visitors.

To see three magpies on the left hand when on a journey is unlucky; but two on the right hand is a good omen.

If you hear the cuckoo on your right hand you will have luck all the year after.

Whoever kills a robin redbreast will never have good luck were they to live a thousand years.

A water wagtail near the house betokens bad news on its way to you.

If the first lamb of the season is born black, it foretells mourning garments for the family within the year.

It is very lucky for a hen and her chickens to stray into your house. Also it is good to meet a white lamb in the early morning with the sunlight on its face.

It is unlucky to meet a magpie, a cat, or a lame woman when going a journey. Or for a cock to meet a person in the doorway and crow before him--then the journey should be put off.

If one magpie comes chattering to your door it is a sign of death; but if two prosperity will follow. For a magpie to come to the door and look at you is a sure death-sign, and nothing can avert the doom.

A flight of rooks over an army betokens defeat; if over a house, or over people when driving or walking, death will follow.

It is very unlucky to ask a man on his way to fish where he is going. And many would turn back, knowing that it was an evil spell.

When a swarm of bees suddenly quits the hive it is a sign that death is hovering near the house. But the evil may be averted by the powerful prayers and exorcism of the priest.

The shoe of a horse or of an ass nailed to the door-post will bring good luck; because these animals were in the stall when Christ was born, and are blessed for evermore. But the shoe must be found, not given, in order to bring luck.

In whatever quarter you are looking when you first hear the cuckoo in the season, you will be travelling in that direction before the year is over.

It was the privilege of the chief bards to wear mantles made of birds' plumage. A short cape flung on the shoulders made of mallards' necks and crests must have been very gorgeous in effect, glittering like jewels, when the torch-light played on the colours at the festivals.

THE PROPERTIES OF HERBS AND THEIR USE IN MEDICINE

THE Irish, according to the saying of a wise man of the race, are the last of the 305 great Celtic nations of antiquity spoken of by Josephus, the Jewish historian; and they alone preserve inviolate the ancient venerable language, minstrelsy, and Bardic traditions, with the strange and mystic secrets of herbs, through whose potent powers they can cure disease, cause love or hatred, discover the hidden mysteries of life and death, and dominate over the fairy wiles or the malific demons.

The ancient people used to divine future events, victory in wars, safety in a dangerous voyage, triumph of a projected undertaking, success in love,

recovery from sickness, or the approach of death; all through the skilful use of herbs, the knowledge of which had come down to them through the earliest traditions of the human race. One of these herbs, called the *Fairy-plant*, was celebrated for its potent power of divination; but only the adepts knew the mystic manner of its preparation for use.

There was another herb of which a drink was made, called the *Bardic potion*, for the Bards alone had the secret of the herb, and of the proper mode of treatment by which its mystic power could be revealed. This potion they gave their infant children at their birth, for it had the singular property of endowing the recipient with a fairy sweetness of voice of the most rapturous and thrilling charm. And instances are recorded of men amongst the Celtic Bards, who, having drunk of this potion in early life, were ever after endowed with the sweet voice, like fairy music, that swayed the hearts of the hearers as they chose to love or war, joy or sadness, as if by magic influence, or lulled them into the sweet calm of sleep. Such, according to the Bardic legends, was the extraordinary power of voice possessed by the great Court Minstrel of Fionn Ma-Coul, who resided with the great chief at his palace of Almuin, and always sat next him at the royal table.

The virtue of herbs is great, but they must be gathered at night, and laid in the hand of a dead man to hold. There are herbs that produce love, and herbs that produce sterility; but only the fairy doctor knows the secrets of their power, and he will reveal the knowledge to no man unless to an adept. The wise women learn the mystic powers from the fairies, but how they pay for the knowledge none dare to tell.

The fairy doctors are often seized with trembling while uttering a charm, and look round with a scared glance of terror, as if some awful presence were beside them. But the people have, the most perfect faith in the herbmen and wise women, and the faith may often work the cure.

There are seven herbs of great value and power; they are ground ivy, vervain, eyebright, groundsel, foxglove, the bark of the elder-tree, and the young shoots of the hawthorn.

Nine balls of these mixed together may be taken, and afterwards a potion made of bog-water and salt, boiled in a vessel, with a piece of money and an elf-stone. The elf-stone is generally found near a rath; it has great virtues, but being once lifted up by the spade it must never again touch the earth, or all its virtue is gone. (This elf-stone is in reality only an ancient stone arrowhead.)

The *Mead Cailleath*, or wood anemone, is used as a plaster for wounds.

The hazel-tree has many virtues. It is sacred and powerful against devils' wiles, and has mysteries and secret properties known to the wise and the adepts. The ancient Irish believed that there were fountains at the head of the chief rivers of Ireland, over each of which grew nine hazel-trees that at certain times produced beautiful red nuts. These nuts fell on the surface of the water, and the salmon in the river came up and ate of them, which

caused the red spots on the salmon. ' And whoever could catch and eat one of these salmon would be indued with the sublimest poetic intellect. hence the phrase current amongst the people: "Had I the net of science;" "Had I eaten of the salmon of knowledge." And this supernatural knowledge came to the great Fionn through the touch of a salmon, and made him foreknow all events.

Of all herbs the yarrow is the best for cures and potions. It is even sewn up in clothes as a preventive of disease.

The *Liss-more*, or great herb, has also strong healing power, and is used as a charm.

There is an herb, also, or fairy grass, called the *Faud Shaughran*, or the "stray sod," and whoever treads the path it grows on is compelled by an irresistible impulse to travel on without stopping, all through the night, delirious and restless, over bog and mountain, through hedges and ditches, till wearied and bruised and cut, his garments torn, his hands bleeding, he finds himself in the morning twenty or thirty miles, perhaps, from his own home. And those who fall under this strange influence have all the time the sensation of flying and are utterly unable to pause or turn back or change their career. There is, however, another herb that can neutralize the effects of the *Faud Shaughran*, but only the initiated can utilize its mystic properties.

Another grass is the *Fair-Gortha*, or the "hunger-stricken sod," and if the hapless traveller accidentally treads on this grass by the road-side, while passing on a journey, either by night or day, he becomes at once seized with the most extraordinary cravings of hunger and weakness, and unless timely relief is afforded he must certainly die.

When a child is sick a fairy woman is generally sent for, who makes a drink for the patient of those healing herbs of which she only has the knowledge. A childless woman is considered to have the strongest power over the secrets of herbs, especially those used' for the maladies of children.

There is an herb, grown on one of the western islands off the coast of Connemara, which is reported to have great and mystic power. But no one will venture to pronounce its name. If it is desired to know for certain whether one lying sick will recover, the nearest relative must go out and look for the herb just as the sun is rising And while holding it in the hand, an ancient form of incantation must be said. If the herb remains fresh and green the patient will certainly recover, but if it wither in the hand while the words of the incantation are said over it, then the sick person is doomed. He will surely die.

It was from their great knowledge of the properties of herbs that the Tuatha-de-Dananns obtained the reputation of being sorcerers and necromancers. At the great battle of Moytura in Mayo, fought about three thousand years ago, Dianecht, the great, wise Druid physician to the army, prepared a bath of herbs and plants in the line of the battle, of such wonderful curative efficacy that the wounded who were plunged into it

came out whole, it being a sovereign remedy for all diseases. But the king of the Tuatha having lost his hand in the combat, the bath had no power to heal him. So Dianecht made him a silver hand, and the monarch was ever after known in history as *Nuad Airgeat lamh* (Nuad of the silver hand).

All herbs pulled on May Day Eve have a sacred healing power, if pulled in the name of the Holy Trinity; but if in the name of Satan, they work evil. Some herbs are malific if broken by the hand. So the plant is tied to a dog's foot, and when he runs it breaks, without a hand touching it, and may be used with safety.

A man pulled a certain herb on May Eve to cure his son who was sick to death. The boy recovered, but disappeared and was never heard of after, and the father died that day year. He had broken the fatal herb with the hand and so the doom fell on him.

Another man did the like, and gave the herb to his son to eat, who immediately began to bark like a dog, and so continued till he died.

The fatal herbs have signs known only to the fairy doctors, who should always be consulted before treating the sick in the family.

There are *seven* herbs that nothing natural or supernatural can injure; they are vervain, John's-wort, speedwell, eyebright, mallow, yarrow, and self-help. But they must be pulled at noon on a bright day, near the full of the moon, to have full power.

It is firmly believed that the herb-women who perform curses receive their knowledge from the fairies, who impart to them the mystical secrets of herbs and where to find them; but these secrets must not be revealed except on the death-bed, and then only to the eldest of the family. Many mysterious rites are practised in the making and the giving of potions; and the messenger who carries the draught to the sufferer must never look behind him nor utter a word till he hands the medicine to the patient, who instantly swallows a cup of the mixture before other hands have touched it.

A celebrated doctor in the south was an old woman, who had lived seven years with the fairies, She performed wonderful cures, and only required a silver tenpence to be laid on her table for the advice given and for the miraculous herb potion.

A LOVE POTION

Some of the country people have still a traditional remembrance of very powerful herbal remedies, and love potions are even now frequently in use. They are generally prepared by an old woman; but must be administered by the person who wishes to inspire the tender passion. At the same time, to give a love potion is considered a very awful act, as the result may be fatal, or at least full of danger.

A fine, handsome young man, of the best character and conduct, suddenly became wild and reckless, drunken and disorderly, from the effect, it was believed, of a love potion administered to him by a young girl who was passionately in love with him. When she saw the change produced in him by her act, she became moody and nervous, as if a constant terror were over her, and no one ever saw her smile again. Finally, she became half deranged, and after a few years of a strange, solitary life, she died of melancholy and despair. This was said to be "The Love-potion Curse."

LOVE DREAMS

The girl who wishes to see her future husband must go out and gather certain herbs in the light of the full moon of the new year, repeating this charm—

*"Moon, moon, tell unto me
When my true love I shall see?
What fine clothes am I to wear?
How many children shall I bear?
For if my love comes not to me
Dark and dismal my life will be."*

Then the girl, cutting three pieces of clay from the sod with a black-hafted knife, carries them home, ties them up in the left stocking with the right garter, places the parcel under her pillow, and dreams a true dream of the man she is to marry and of all her future fate.

TO CAUSE LOVE

Ten leaves of the hemlock dried and powdered and mixed in food or drink will make the person you like to love you in return.

Also keep a sprig of mint in your hand till the herb grows moist and warm, then take hold of the hand of the woman you love, and she will follow you as long as the two hands close over the herb. No invocation is necessary; but silence must be kept between this two parties for ten minutes, to give the charm time to work with due efficacy.

MEDICAL SUPERSTITIONS AND ANCIENT CHARMS

THE healing art in all the early stages of a nation's life, and amongst all primitive tribes, has been associated with religion. For the wonderful effects produced by certain herbs and modes, of treatment were believed by the simple and unlettered people to be due to supernatural influence acting in a mystic and magical manner on the person afflicted.

The medicine men were therefore treated with the profoundest awe and respect. And the medicine women came in also for their share of veneration and often of superstitious dread; for their mysterious incantations were supposed to have been taught to them by fairies and the spirits of the mountain.

The Irish from the most remote antiquity were devoted to mystical medicine, and had a remarkable knowledge of cures and remedies for disease, obtained through the power and action of herbs on the human frame.

The physicians of the pagan era formed a branch of the Druid priesthood, and were treated with distinguished honour. They had special places assigned to them at the royal banqueting table at Tara, and a certain revenue was secured to them that they might live honourably.

When in attendance on a patient the doctor was entitled by law to his diet, along with four of his pupils; but if he failed to cure from deficiency of skill, he was obliged to refund the fees and pay back all the expenses of his keep; a measure which no doubt greatly stimulated the serious attention of the learned ollamhs of healing to the case in hand.

So great, indeed, was the importance attached to the healing art in Ireland, that even prior to the Christian era, a building of the nature of an hospital was erected at Tara, near to the palace of the king. This was called "The House of Sorrow," and this sick and wounded were provided there with all necessary care.

On one occasion it is recorded that a great chief and prince out of Munster was brought to "The House of Sorrow" to be treated of wounds received in battle, but the attendant, through treachery, placed poison in the wounds, and then closed them so carefully that there was no external sign, though the groans of the wounded man were terrible to hear. Then the learned Fioneen was sent for, "this prophetic physician," as he was called, from his great skill in diagnosis; and when he arrived with three of his pupils at the hospital they found the chief lying prostrate, groaning in horrible agony.

"What groan is that?" asked the master of the first pupil.

"It is from a poisoned barb," he answered.

"And what groan is that?" asked the master, of the second pupil.

"It is from a hidden reptile," he answered.

"And what groan is that?" asked Fioneer of the third pupil.

"It is from a poisoned seed," he answered.

Then Fioneer set to work, and having cauterized the wounds with red hot irons, the poisonous bodies were extracted from beneath the skin, and the chief was healed.

In later times the Irish physicians were much celebrated for their learning, and numerous Irish medical manuscripts are in existence, both in Ireland and England, and are also scattered through the public libraries of the continent. They are chiefly written in Latin, with a commentary in Irish, and show a thorough knowledge on the part of the writers of the works of Hippocrates, Galen, Aristotle, and others as celebrated. For after the introduction of Christianity Latin was much cultivated in the Irish schools, and the priests and physicians not only wrote, but could converse fluently in Latin, which language became the chief medium of communication between them and the learned men of the continent. But the most ancient mode of procedure amongst the Irish ollamhs and adepts was of a medico-religious character; consisting of herb cures, fairy cures, charms, invocations, and certain magical ceremonies. A number of these cures have been preserved traditionally by the people, and form a very interesting study of early medical superstitions, as they have been handed down through successive generations; for the profession of a physician was hereditary in certain families, and the accumulated lore of centuries was transmitted carefully from father to son by this custom and usage.

* * *

Many of the ancient cures and charms are strange and mystic, and were accompanied by singular mysterious forms, which no doubt in many cases aided the cure; especially amongst a people so imaginative and susceptible to spiritual influences as the Irish. Others show a fervent faith and have a pathetic simplicity of expression, such as we find in "The Charm against Sorrow," and others, from the original Irish, of equal pathos and tenderness, to be quoted further on. The utterance evidently of a people of deep, almost sublime, faith in the Divine power of the Ruler of the world, and of the ever-present ministration of saints and angels to humanity.

Every act of the Irish peasant's life has always been connected with this belief in unseen spiritual agencies. The people live in an atmosphere of the supernatural, and nothing would induce them to slight an ancient form or break through a traditional usage. They believe that the result would be something awful; too terrible to be spoken of save in a whisper, should the customs of their forefathers be lightly interfered with.

In the Western Islands especially, the old superstitions that have come down from the ancient times are observed with this most solemn reverence,

and the people in fact, as to their habits and ideas, remain much the same as bi. Patrick left them fourteen hundred years ago. The swift currents of thought that stir the great centres of civilization and impel the human intellect on its path of progress, have never reached them; all the waves of the centuries drift by their shores and leave them unchanged.

It is therefore in the islands and along the western coast that one gathers most of those strange legends, charms, mysteries, and world-old superstitions which have lingered longer in Ireland than in any other part of Europe.

Many of those included in this following selection were narrated by the peasants, either in Irish, or in the expressive Irish-English, which still retains enough of the ancient idiom to make the language impressively touching and picturesque. The ancient charms which have come down by tradition from a remote antiquity are peculiarly interesting from their deep human pathos, blended with the sublime trust in the Divine invisible power, so characteristic of the Irish temperament in all ages. A faith that believes implicitly, trusts devoutly, and hopes infinitely; when the soul in its sorrow turns to heaven for the aid which cannot be found on earth, or given by earthly hands. The following charms from the Irish express much of this mingled spirit of faith and hope:--

AGAINST SORROW

A charm set by Mary for her Son, before the fair man and the turbulent woman laid Him in the grave.

The charm of Michael with the shield;

Of the palm-branch of Christ;

Of Bridget with her veil.

The charm which God set for Himself when the divinity within Him was darkened.

A. charm to be said by the cross when the night is black and the soul is heavy with sorrow.

A charm to be said at sunrise, with the hands on the breast when the eyes are red with weeping, and the madness of grief is strong.

A charm that has no words, only the silent prayer.

TO WIN LOVE

"O Christ, by your five wounds, by the nine orders of angels, if this woman is ordained for me, let me hold her hand now, and breathe her breath. O my love, I set a charm to the top of your head; to the sole of your foot; to each side of your breast, that you may not leave me nor forsake me. As a foal after the mare, as a child after the mother, may you follow and stay with me till death comes to part us asunder. AMEN."

Another.

A charm of most desperate love, to be written with a raven's quill in the blood of the ring finger of the left hand.

"By the power that Christ brought from heaven, mayest thou love me, woman! As the sun follows its course, mayest thou follow me. As light to the eye, as bread to the hungry, as joy to the heart, may thy presence be with me, O woman that I love, till death comes to part us asunder."

FOR THE NIGHT-FIRE (THE FEVER)

"God save thee, Michael, archangel! God save thee!

"What aileth thee, O man?"

"A headache and a sickness and a weakness of the heart. O Michael, archangel, canst thou cure me, O angel of the Lord?"

"May three things cure thee, O man. May the shadow of Christ fall on thee! May the garment of Christ cover thee May the breath of Christ breathe on thee! And when I come again thou wilt be healed."

These words are said over the patient while his arms are lifted in the form of a cross, and water is sprinkled on his head.

FOR A PAIN IN THE SIDE

"God save you, my three brothers, God save you! And how far have ye to go, my three brothers?"

"To the Mount of Olivet, to bring back gold for a cup to hold the tears of Christ."

"Go, then. Gather the gold; and may the tears of Christ fall on it, and thou wilt be cured, both body and soul."

These words must be said while a drink is given to the patient.

FOR THE MEASLES

"The child has the measles,' said John the Baptist.

"The time is short till he is well,' said the Son of God.

"When?' said John the Baptist.

"Sunday morning, before sunrise,' said the Son of God." This is to be repeated three times, kneeling at a cross, for three mornings before sunrise, and the child will be cured by the Sunday following.

FOR THE MAD FEVER

Three stones must be charmed by the hands of a wise fairy doctor, and cast by his hand, saying as he does so--"The first stone I cast is for the head in the mad fever; the second stone I cast is for the heart in the mad fever; the third stone I cast is for the back in the mad fever.

"In the name of the Trinity, let peace come. AMEN."

AGAINST ENEMIES

Three things are of the Evil One—

An evil eye;
An evil tongue;
An evil mind.

Three things are of God; and these three are what Mary told to her Son, for she heard them in heaven—

The merciful word;
The singing word;
And the good word.

May the power of these three holy things be on all the men and women of Erin for evermore

TO EXTRACT A THORN

"The briar that spreads, the thorn that grows, the sharp spike that pierced the brow of Christ, give you power to draw this thorn from the flesh, or let it perish inside; in the name of the Trinity. AMEN."

TO CAUSE HATRED BETWEEN LOVERS

Take a handful of clay from a new-made grave, and shake it between them, saying--

"Hate ye one another! May ye be as hateful to each other as sin to Christ, as bread eaten without blessing is to God."

FOR LOVE

This is a charm I set for love; a woman's charm of love and desire; a charm of God that none can break—

"You for me, and I for thee and for none else; your face to mine, and your head turned away from all others."

This is to be repeated three times secretly, over a drink given to the one beloved.

HOW TO HAVE MONEY ALWAYS

Kill a black cock, and go to the meeting of three cross-roads where a murderer is buried. Throw the dead bird over your left shoulder then and there, after nightfall, in the name of the devil, holding a piece of money in your hand all the while. And ever after, no matter what you spend, you will always find the same piece of money undiminished in your pocket.

FOR THE GREAT WORM*

"I kill a hound. I kill a small hound. I kill a deceitful hound. I kill a worm, wherein there is terror; I kill all his wicked brood. Seven angels from Paradise will help me, that I may do valiantly, and give no more time to the worm to live than while I recite this prayer. AMEN."

* The ancient serpent-idol was called in Irish, "The Great Worm." St. Patrick destroyed it, and had it thrown into the sea. There are no serpents now to be found in Ireland, not even grass snakes or scorpions.

FOR SORE EYES

"Take away the pain, O Mary, mother, and scatter the mist from the eyes. For all power is given to the mother of Christ to give light to the eyes, and to drive the red mist back to the billows whence it came."

FOR PAINS IN THE BODY

Rub the part affected with flax and tow, heated in the fire, repeating in Irish--

"In the name of a rough man and a mild woman, and of the Lamb of God, be healed from your pains and your sins. So be it. AMEN."

This custom refers to the tradition that one day the Lord Christ, being weary, asked leave to rest in a house, but was refused by the master of the house, a rough, rude man. Then the wife, being a mild woman, had pity on the wayfarer, and brought Him in to rest, and gave Him a cup of water to drink, and spake kindly to Him. After which the man was suddenly taken with severe pains, and seemed like to die in his agony.

On this Christ called for some flax and tow, and, breathing on it, placed it on the part affected, by which means the man was quite healed. And then the Lord Christ went His way, but not before the man had humbly asked pardon for his rudeness to a stranger.

The tradition of this cure has remained ever since, and a hot plaster of flax and tow is used by the peasantry invariably for all sudden pains, and found to be most efficacious as a cure.

AGAINST DROWNING

"May Christ and His saints stand between you and harm.

Mary and her Son.

St. Patrick with his staff.

Martin with his mantle.

Bridget with her veil.

Michael with his shield.

And God over all with His strong right hand."

IN TIME OF BATTLE

"O Mary, who had the victory over all women, give me victory now over my enemies, that they may fall to the ground, as wheat when it is mown."

FOR THE RED RASH

"Who will heal me from the red, thirsty, shivering cold disease that came from the foreigner, and kills people with its poisonous pain?" "The prayer of Mary to her Son, the prayer of Columbkille to God; these will heal thee. AMEN."

Another.

Say this oration three times over the patient, making the sign of the cross each time--

"Bridget, Patrick, Solomon, and the great Mary, banish this redness off you."

Then take butter, breathe on it quite close, and give it to the person to chafe himself therewith.

To ascertain if he will recover, put a handful of yarrow in his hand while he is sleeping; if it is withered in the morning he will die; but if it remains fresh the disease will leave him.

TO TAME A HORSE

Whisper the Creed in his right ear on a Friday, and again in his left ear on a Wednesday. Do this weekly till he is tamed; for so he will be.

A VERY ANCIENT CHARM AGAINST WOUNDS OR POISONS

"The poison of a serpent, the venom of the dog, the sharpness of the spear, doth not well in man. The blood of one dog, the blood of many dogs, the blood of the hound of Fliethas--these I invoke. It is not a wart to which my spittle is applied. I strike disease; I strike wounds. I strike the disease of the dog that bites, of the thorn that wounds, of the iron that strikes. I invoke the three daughters of Fliethas against the serpent.

Benediction on this body to be healed; benediction on the spittle; benediction on him who casts out the disease. In the name of God. AMEN,"

FOR A SORE BREAST

To be said in Irish, while a piece of butter is rubbed over the breast--

"O Son, see how swelled is the breast of the woman! O, you that bore a Son, look at it yourself! O Mary! O King of Heaven, let this woman be healed! AMEN."

FOR A WOUND

Close the wound tightly with the two fingers, and repeat these words slowly--

"In the name of the Father, Son, and holy Mary. The wound was red, the cut was deep, and the flesh was sore; but there will be no more blood, and no more pain, till the blessed Virgin Mary bears a child again."

FOR THE EVIL EYE

This is a charm Mary gave to St. Bridget, and she wrote it down, and hid it in the hair of her head, without deceit--

"If a fairy, or a man, or a woman hath overlooked thee, there are three greater in heaven who will cast all evil from thee into the great and terrible sea. Pray to them, and to the seven angels of God, and they will watch over thee. AMEN."

FOR ST ANTHONY'S FIRE

"The fire of earth is hot, and the fire of hell is hotter; but the love of Mary is above all. Who will quench the fire? Who will heal the sick? May the fire of God consume the Evil One! AMEN."

HOW TO GO INVISIBLE

Get a raven's heart, split it open with a black-hafted knife; make three cuts and place a black bean in each cut. Then plant it, and when the beans sprout put one in your mouth and say --

*"By virtue of Satan's heart,
And by strength of my great art,
I desire to be invisible."*

And so it will be as long as the bean is kept in the mouth.

FOR PAINS

"I kill the evil; I kill the worm in the flesh, the worm in the grass. I put a venomous charm in the murderous pain. The charm that was set by Peter and Paul; the charm that kills the worm in the flesh, in the tooth, in the body."

This oration to be said three times, while the patient is rubbed with butter on the place of the pain.

Another.

A happy mild charm, a charm which Christ discovered. The charm that kills the worm in the flesh.

"May Peter take, may Paul take, may Michael take, the pain away, the cruel pain that kills the back and the life, and darkens the eyes."

This oration written, and tied to a hare's foot, is always to be worn by the person afflicted, hung round the neck.

FOR A SPRAIN

In the Western Isles the following charm is used for a sprain--

A strand of black wool is wound round and round the ankle, while the operator recites in a low voice—

*"The Lord rade and the foal slade,
He lighted and He righted;
Set joint to joint and bone to bone,
And sinew unto sinew.
In the name of God and the Saints,
Of Mary and her Son,
Let this man be healed. AMEN."*

A. similar charm was used in Germany in the tenth century, according to Jacob Grimm.

TO CAUSE LOVE

Golden butter on a new-made dish, such as Mary set before Christ. This to be given in the presence of a mill, of a stream, and the presence of a tree; the lover saying softly--

"O woman, loved by me, mayest thou give me thy heart, thy soul and body. AMEN."

FOR THE BITE OF A MAD DOG

An oration which Colum-Cille set to a wound full of poison--

"Arise, O Carmac, O Clunane, through Christ be thou healed. By the hand of Christ be thou healed in blood, in marrow, and in bane. AMEN."

This oration to be pronounced over a man or a woman, a horse or a cow, but never over a hog or a dog. The wound to be rubbed with butter during the oration.

FOR TOOTHACHE

Go to a graveyard; kneel upon any grave; say three paters and three ayes for the soul of the dead lying beneath. Then take a handful of grass from the grave, chew it well, casting forth each bite without swallowing any portion. After this process the sufferer, were he to live a hundred years, will never have toothache any more.

Another.

The patient must vow a vow to God, the Virgin, and the new moon, never to comb his hair on a Friday, in remembrance of relief should he be cured; and whenever or wherever he first sees the moon he must fall on his knees and say five prayers in gratitude for the cure, even if crossing a river at the time.

Another.

Carry in your pocket the two jaw-bones of a haddock; for ever since the miracle of the loaves and fishes these bones are an infallible remedy against toothache, and the older they are the better, as nearer the time of the miracle.

Also this charm is to be sewn on the clothes—

*"As Peter sat on a marble stone,
The Lord came to him all alone,
'Peter, Peter, what makes you shake?'
'O Lord and Master, it is the toothache.'
Then Christ said, 'Take these for My sake,
And never more you'll have toothache.'"*

To avoid toothache never shave on a Sunday.

FOR FRECKLES

Anoint a freckled face with the blood of a bull, or of a hare, and it will put away the freckles and make the skin fair and clear. Also the distilled water of walnuts is good.

FOR A BURN

There is a pretty secret to cure a burn without a scar: "Take sheep's suet and the rind of the elder-tree, boil both together, and the ointment will cure a burn without leaving a mark."

FOR THE MEMORY

The whitest of frankincense beaten fine, and drunk in white wine, wonderfully assisteth the memory, and is profitable for the stomach also.

FOR THE FALLING SICKNESS

Take a hank of grey yarn, a lock of the patient's hair, some parings of his nails, and bury them deep in the earth, repeating, in Irish, as a burial service, "Let the great sickness lie there for ever. By the power of Mary and the soul of Paul, let the great sickness lie buried in the clay, and never more rise out of the ground. AMEN."

If the patient, on awaking from sleep, calls out the name of the person who uttered these words, his recovery is certain.

If a person crosses over the patient while he is in a fit, or stands between him and the fire, then the sickness will cleave to him and depart from the other that was afflicted.

FOR CHIN-COUGH

A griddle cake made of meal, to be given, not bought or made; but a cake *given* of love or of charity, not for begging; a cake given freely, with a prayer and a blessing; and from the breakfast of a man and his wife who had the same name before marriage; this is the cure.

The touch of a piebald horse. Even a piebald horse pawing before the door helps the cure.

The child to be passed seven times under and over an ass while a red string is tied on the throat of the patient.

Nine hairs from the tail of a black cat, chopped up and soaked in water, which is then swallowed, and the cough will be relieved.

"One day when out, snipe shooting," a gentleman writes, "I saw a horrid-looking insect staring up at me. I called to a man close by, and asked him the name of it. He told me it was called the *Thordall*, and was reckoned a great cure for the *chin-cough*; for if any one got it safe in a bottle and kept it prisoner till it, died, the disease would go away from the patient. It was just the time to try the cure, for my child was laid up with the epidemic. So I bottled my friend and daily examined the state of his health. It lasted for a fortnight, and at the end of that time the child had quite recovered, and the horrible-looking insect creature lay dead."

FOR RHEUMATISM

The operator makes passes, like the mesmerist, over the member affected by the rheumatic pain, never touching the part, but moving his hand slowly over it at some distance, while he mutters a form of words in a low voice.

FOR A STYE ON THE EYELID

Point a gooseberry thorn at it nine times, saying, "Away, away, away!" and the stye will vanish presently and disappear.

TO CURE WARTS

On meeting a funeral, take some of the clay from under the feet of the men who bear the coffin and apply it to the wart, wishing strongly at the same time that it may disappear; and so it will be.

FOR A STITCH IN THE SIDE

Rub the part affected with unsalted butter, and make time sign of the cross seven times over the place.

FOR WEAK EYES

A decoction of the flowers of daisies boiled down is an excellent wash, to be used constantly.

FOR WATER ON THE BRAIN

Cover the head well with wool, then place oil-skin over, and the water will be drawn up out of the head. When the wool is quite saturated the brain will be free and the child cured.

FOR HIP DISEASE

Take three green stones, gathered from a running brook, between midnight and morning, while no word is said. In silence it must be done. Then uncover the limb and rub each stone several times closely downwards from the hip to the toe, saying in Irish--

*"Wear away, wear away,
There you shall not stay,
Cruel pain--away, away."*

FOR THE MUMPS

Wrap the child in a blanket, take it to the pigsty, rub the child's head to the back of a pig and the mumps will leave it and pass from the child to the animal.

Another.

Take nine black stones gathered before sunrise, and bring the patient with a rope round his neck to a holy well--not speaking all the while. Then cast in three stones in the name of God, three in the name of Christ, and three in the name of Mary. Repeat this process for three mornings and the disease will be cured.

FOR EPILEPSY

Take nine pieces of young elder twig; run a thread of silk of three strands through the pieces, each piece being an inch long. Tie this round the patient's neck next the skin. Should the thread break and the amulet fall, it must be buried deep in the earth and another amulet made like the first, for if once it touches the ground the charm is lost.

Another.

Take nine pieces of a dead man's skull, grind them to powder, and then mix with a decoction of wall rue. Give the patient a spoonful of this mixture every morning fasting, till the whole potion is swallowed. None must be left, or the dead man would come to look for the pieces of his skull.

FOR DEPRESSION OF HEART

When a person becomes low and depressed and careless about everything, as if all vital strength and energy had gone, he is said to have got a fairy blast. And blast-water must be poured over him by the hands of a fairy doctor while saying, "In the name of the saint with the sword, who has strength before God and stands at His right hand." Great care being taken that- no portion of the water is profaned. Whatever is left after the operation must be poured on the fire.

FOR THE FAIRY DART

Fairy darts are generally aimed at the fingers, causing the joints to swell and grow red and inflamed. An eminent fairy-woman made the cure of fairy darts her specialty, and she was sent for by all the country round, and was generally successful. But she had no power unless *asked* to make the cure, and she took no reward at the time; not till the patient was cured, and the dart extracted. The treatment included a great many prayers and much anointing with a salve, of which she only had the secret. Then she proceeded to extract the dart. with great solemnity, working with a small instrument, on the point of which she finally produced the dart. This proved to be a bit of flax artfully laid under the skin by the malicious fairies, causing all the evil, and of course on seeing the flax no one could doubt the power of the operator, and the grateful patient paid his fee.

VARIOUS SUPERSTITIONS AND CURES

THERE is a book, a little book, and the house which has it will never be burned; the ship that holds it will never founder; the woman who keeps it in her hand will be safe in childbirth. But none except a fairy man knows the name of the book, and he will not reveal it for love or money; only on his death-bed will he tell the secret of the name to the one person he selects.

The adepts and fairy doctors keep their mysteries very secret, and it is not easy to discover the word of a charm, for the operator loses his power if the words are said without the proper preliminaries, or if said by a profane

person without faith, for the operator should not have uttered the mystery in the hearing of one who would mock, or treat the matter lightly; therefore he is punished.

Some years ago an old man lived in Mayo who had great knowledge of charms, and of certain love philtres that no woman could resist. But before his death he enclosed the written charms in a strong iron box, with directions that no one was to dare to open it except the eldest son of an eldest son in a direct line from himself.

Some people pretend that they have read the charms; and one of them has the strange power to make every one in the house begin to dance, and they can never cease dancing till another spell has been said over them.

But the guardian of the iron box is the only one who knows the magic secret of the spell, and he exacts a good price before he utters it, and so reveals or destroys the witchcraft of the dance.

The juice of deadly night-shade distilled, and given in a drink, will make the person who drinks believe whatever you will to tell him, and choose him to-believe.

A bunch of mint tied round the waist is a sure remedy for disorders of the stomach.

A. sick person's bed must be placed north and south, not cross ways.

Nettles gathered in a churchyard and boiled down for a drink have the power to cure dropsy.

The touch from the hand of a seventh son cures the bite of a mad dog. This is also an Italian superstition.

The hand of a dead man was a powerful incantation, But it was chiefly used by women. The most eminent fairy women always collected the mystic herbs for charms and cures by the light of a candle held by a dead man's hand at midnight or by the full moon.

When a woman first takes ill in her confinement, unlock instantly every press and drawer in the house, but when the child is born, lock them all up again at once, for if care is not taken the fairies will get in and hide in the drawers and presses, to be ready to steal away the little mortal baby when they get the opportunity, and place some ugly, wizened changeling in the cradle beside the poor mother. Therefore every key should be turned, every lock made fast.; and if the fairies are hidden inside, let them stay there until all danger is over for the baby by the proper precautions being taken, such as a red coal set. under the cradle, and a branch of mountain ash tied over it, or of the alder-tree, according to the sex of the child, for both trees have mystic virtues, probably because of the ancient superstition that the first man was created from an alder-tree, and the first woman from the mountain ash.

The fairies, however, are sometimes successful in carrying off a baby, and the mother finds in the morning a poor weakly little sprite in the cradle in place of her own splendid child. But should time mortal infant happen to

grow up ugly, the fairies send it back, for they love beauty above all timings; and the fairy chiefs greatly desire a handsome mortal wife, so that a handsome girl must be well guarded, or they will carry her off. The children of such unions grow up beautiful and clever, but are also wild, reckless and extravagant. They are known at once by the beauty of their eyes and hair, and they have a magic fascination that no one can resist, and also a fairy gift of music and song.

If a person is bitten by a dog, the dog must be killed, whether mad or not, for it might become mad; then, so also would the person who had been touched by the saliva of time animal.

If, by accident, you find the back tooth of a horse, carry it about with you as long as you live, and you will never want money; but it must be found by chance.

When a family has been carried off by fever, the house where they died may be again inhabited with safety if a certain number of sheep are driven in to sleep there for three nights.

An iron ring worn on the fourth finger was considered effective against rheumatism by the Irish peasantry from ancient times.

Paralysis is cured by stroking, but many forms and mystic incantations are also used during the process; and only certain persons have the power in the hands that can effect a cure by the magic of the stroke.

The seed of docks tied to time left arm of a woman will prevent her being barren.

A spoonful of *aqua vitae* sweetened with sugar, and a little grated bread added, that it may not annoy time brain or the liver, will preserve from lethargy and apoplexy and all cold diseases.

The juice of carrots boiled down is admirable for purifying time blood.

Clippings of the hair and nails of a child tied up in a linen cloth and placed under the cradle will cure convulsions.

Tober Maire (Mary's well), near Dundalk, has a great reputation for cures. And thousands used to visit it on Lady Day for weak eyesight, and the lowness of heart. Nine times they must go round the well on their knees, always westward. Then drink a cup of the water, and not only are they cured of their ailment, but are as free from sin as time angels in heaven.

When children are pining away, they are supposed to be fairy-struck; and the juice of twelve leaves of foxglove may be given: also in cases of fever time same.

A bunch of mint tied round the wrist keeps off infection and disease.

There is a well near the Boyne where King James washed his sword after time battle, and ever since time water has power to cure the king's evil.

When a seventh son is born, if an earth-worm is put into the infant's hand and kept there till it dies, the child will have power to charm away all diseases.

The ancient arrowheads, called elf-stones by the people, are used as charms to guard the cattle.

It is not safe to take an unbaptized child in your arms without making time sign of time cross over it.

It is unlucky to give a coal of fire out of the house before the child is baptized. And a piece of iron should be sewn in the infant's clothes, and kept there till after the baptism.

Take a piece of bride-cake and pass it three times through a wedding-ring, then sleep on it, and you will see in a dream the face of your future spouse.

It is unlucky to accept a lock of hair, or a four-footed beast from a lover.

People ought to remember that egg-shells are favourite retreats of the fairies, therefore the judicious eater should always break the shell after use, to prevent the fairy sprite from taking up his lodgment therein.

Finvarra, the king of the fairies of the west, keeps up the most friendly relations with most of the best families of Galway, especially with time Kirwans of Castle Racket, for Finvarra is a gentleman, every inch of him, and the Kirwans always leave out kegs of wine for him at night of the best Spanish wine. And in return, it is said, the wine vaults at Castle Racket are never empty, though the wine flows freely for all comers.

If a living worm is put in-to the hand of a child before he is baptized, and kept there till the worm is dead, that child will have power in the after life to cure all diseases to which children are subject.

After being cured from a sickness, take an oath never to comb the hair on a Friday, that so the memory of the grace received may remain by this sign till your death. Or whenever you first see the new moon, kneel down and say an ave and a pater; this also is for memory of grace done.

People born in the morning cannot see spirits or the fairy world; but those born at night have power over ghosts, and can see the spirits of the dead.

Unbaptized children are readily seized by the fairies. The best preventive is a little salt tied up in the child's dress when it is laid to sleep in the cradle.

If pursued at night by an evil spirit, or the ghost of one dead, and you hear footsteps behind you. try and reach a stream of running water, for if you can cross it, no devil or ghost will be able to follow you.

If a chair fall as a person rises, it is an unlucky omen.

The fortunate possessor of the four-leaved shamrock will have luck in gambling, luck in racing, and witchcraft will have no power over him. But he must always carry it about his person, and never give it away, or even show it to another.

A purse made from a weasel's skin will never want for money; but the purse must be found, not given or made.

If a man is ploughing, no one should cross the path of the horses.

It is unlucky to steal a plough, or take anything by stealth from a smith's forge.

When yawning make the sign of the cross instantly over the mouth, or the evil spirit will make a rush down and take up his abode within you.

Never give away water before breakfast, nor milk while churning is going on.

A married woman should not walk upon graves, or her child will have a club-foot. If by accident she treads on a grave she must instantly kneel down, say a prayer, and make the sign of the cross on the sole of her shoe three times over.

Never take aim infant in your arms, nor turn your head to look at it without saying, "God bless it." This keeps away the fatal influence of the Evil Eye.

If a bride steers a boat on the day of her marriage, the winds and the waves have no power over it, be the tempest ever so fierce or the stream ever so rapid.

Do not put out a light while people are at supper, or there will be one less at the table before the year is out.

Never give any salt or fire while churning is going on. To upset the salt is exceedingly unlucky and a bad omen; to avert evil gather up the salt and fling it over the right shoulder into the fire, with the left hand.

If you want a person to win at cards, stick a crooked pin in his coat.

The seventh son of a seventh son has power over all diseases, and can cure them by laying on of hands; and a son born after his father's death has power over fevers.

There is one hour in every day when whatever you wish will be granted, but no one knows what that hour is. It is all a chance if we come on it. There is also one hour in the day when ghost seers can see spirits--but only one--at no other time have they the power, yet they never know the hour, the coming of it is a mystery.

In some parts of Ireland the people, it is said, on first seeing the new moon, fall on their knees and address her in a loud voice with the prayer: "O moon; leave us well as thou hast found us!"

It is unlucky to meet a cat, a dog, or a woman, when going out first in the morning; but unlucky above all is it to meet a woman with red hair the first thing in the morning when going on a journey, for her presence brings ill-luck and certain evil.

It is unlucky to pass under a hempen rope; the person who does so will die a violent death, or is fated to commit an evil act in after life, so it is decreed.

The cuttings of your hair should not be thrown where birds can find them; for they will take them to build their nests, and then you will have headaches all the year after.

The cause of a club-foot is this--The mother stood on a cross in a churchyard before her child was born--so evil came.

To cure fever, place the patient on the sandy shore when the tide is coming in, and the retreating waves will carry away the disease and leave him well.

To make the skin beautiful, wash the face in May dew upon May morning just at sunrise.

If the palm of the hand itches you will be getting money; if the elbow, you will be changing beds; if the ear itches and is red and hot, some one is speaking ill of you.

If three drops of water are given to an infant before it is baptized, it will answer the first three questions put to it.

To know the name of the person you are destined to marry, put a snail on a plate of flour--cover it over and leave it all night; in the morning the initial letter of the name will be found traced on the flour by the snail.

If one desires to know if a sick person will recover, take nine smooth stones from the -running water; fling them over the right shoulder, then lay them in a turf fire to remain untouched for one night. If the disease is to end fatally the atones in the morning will emit a clear sound like a bell when struck together.

A whitethorn stick is a very unlucky companion on a journey; but a hazel switch brings good luck and has power over the devil.

A hen that crows is very unlucky and should be killed; very often the hen is stoned, for it is believed that she is bewitched by the fairies.

It is asserted that on Christmas morning the ass kneels down in adoration of Christ, and if a person can manage to touch time cross on the back of the animal at that particular moment the wish of his heart will be granted, whatever it may be.

When taking possession of a new house, every one should bring in some present, however trifling, but nothing should be taken away, and a prayer should be said in each corner of your bedroom, and some article of your clothing be deposited there at the same time.

TO FIND STOLEN GOODS

Place two keys on a sieve, in time form of a cross. Two men hold the sieve, while a third makes the sign of time cross on time forehead of the suspected party, and calls out his name loudly, three times over. If innocent, the keys remain stationary; but if guilty, the keys revolve slowly round time sieve, and then there is no doubt as to who is the thief.

A PRAYER AGAINST THE PLAGUE

"O Star of Heaven, beloved of the Lord, drive away time foul constellation that has slain the people with the wound of dreadful death. O Star of time Sea, save us from the poison-breath that kills, from the enemy that slays in the night. AMEN."

BLESSING

"O aged old woman of the grey locks, may eight hundred blessings twelve times over be on thee! Mayest thou be free from desolation, O woman. of the aged frame! And may many tears fall on thy grave."

A CURE FOR CATTLE

Take nine leaves of the male crowfoot, plucked on a Sunday night; bruise them on a stone tht never was moved since the world began, and never can be moved. Mix with salt and spittle, and apply the plaster to the ear of the sick beast. Repeat this three times for a man, and twice for a horse.

A CHARM FOR SAFETY

Pluck ten blades of yarrow, keep nine, and cast the tenth away for tithe to the spirits. Put the nine in your stocking, under the heel of the right foot, when going a journey, and the Evil One will have no power over you.

AN ELIXIR OF POTENCY

(From a Manuscript of Date 1770)

Two ounces of cochineal, one ounce of gentian root, two drachms of saffron, two drachms of snakeroot, two drachms of salt of wormwood, and the rind of ten oranges, The whole to be steeped in a quart of brandy, and kept for use.

FOR THE BITE OF A MAD DOG

Six ounces of rue, four ounces of garlic, two ounces of Venice treacle, and two ounces of pewter filings. Boil for two hours in a close vessel, in two

quarts of ale, and give a spoonful fasting each morning till the cure is effected. The liquor is to be strained before use.

DREAMS

Never tell your dreams fasting, and always tell them first to a woman called Mary.

To dream of a hearse with white plumes is a wedding; but to dream of a wedding is grief, and death will follow.

To dream of a woman kissing you is deceit; but of a man, friendship; and to dream of a horse is exceedingly lucky.

To dream of a priest is bad; even to dream of the devil is better. Remember, also, either a present or a purchase from a priest is unlucky.

FAIRY DOCTORS

The fairy doctors are generally females. Old women, especially, are considered to have peculiar mystic and supernatural power. They cure chiefly by charms and incantations, transmitted by tradition through many generations; and by herbs, of which they have a surprising knowledge.

The fairies have an aversion to the sight of blood; and the peasants, therefore, have a great objection to being bled, lest "the good people" would be angry. Besides, they have much more faith in charms and incantations than in any dispensary doctor that ever practised amongst them.

CHARMS BY CRYSTALS

The charms by crystals are of great antiquity in Ireland--a mode of divination, no doubt, brought from the East by the early wandering tribes. Many of these stones have been found throughout the country, and are held in great veneration. They are generally globular, and appear to have been originally set in royal sceptres or sacred shrines. A very ancient crystal globe of this kind, with miraculous curative powers, is still to be seen at Currahmore, the seat of the Marquis of Waterford, and it is believed to have been brought from the Holy Land by one of the Le Poers, who had it as a gift from Godfrey de Bouillon. The ball is of rock crystal, a little larger than an orange, and is circled round the middle by a silver band. It is still constantly borrowed by the people to effect cures upon cattle suffering from murrain or other distempers. This is done by placing the ball in a running stream, through which the cattle are driven backwards and forwards many times.

The peasants affirm that the charm never fails in success, and the belief in its miraculous powers is so widespread that people from the most distant parts of Ireland send to Currahmore to borrow it. Even to this day the faith in its magic power continues unabated, and requests for the loan come from every quarter. The Marquis of Waterford leaves it in the care of his steward, and it is freely lent to all coiners; but to the credit of the people it may be noted, that the magic crystal is always brought back to Currahmore with the most scrupulous care.*

** Extract from a letter by the Marchioness of Waterford, on the Currahmore Crystal.*

ALECTROMANTIA

Should a person be bewitched by an evil neighbour, he must take two black cocks, lay a charm over the head of one and let it loose; but the other must be boiled down, feathers and all, and eaten. Then the malice of the neighbour will have no effect on him or his.

Ancient Egypt and Greece had likewise superstitions on the subject of sacrificing a cock. Even the last words of Socrates had reference to this subject. It is remarkable also that in the Christian legend it was a cock that testified indignantly by his crowing against Peter's treachery and cowardice, and aroused in him the remorse that was evidenced by his tears.

FAIRY POWER

It is on Fridays that the fairies have the most power to work evil; therefore Friday is an unlucky day to begin work, or to go on a journey, or to have a wedding; for the spirits are then present everywhere, and hear and see everything that is going on, and will mar and spoil all they can, just out of malice and jealousy of the mortal race.

It is then they strike cattle with their elfin sorrows, lame a horse, steal the milk, and carry off the handsome children, an ugly changeling in exchange, who is soon known to fairy sprite by its voracious appetite, without any natural increase in growth.

This superstition makes the peasant-women often very cruel towards weakly children; and the trial by fire is sometimes resorted to in order to test the nature of the child who is suspected of being a changeling. For this purpose a fairy woman is usually sent for, who makes a drink for the little patient of certain herbs of whose power she alone has the secret knowledge, and a childless woman is considered the best to make the potion. Should

there be no improvement in the child after the treatment with herbs, then the witch-women sometimes resorts to terrible measures to test the fairy nature of the sufferer.

A child who was suspected of being a change because he was wasted and thin and always restless and fretful was ordered by the witch-woman to be placed for three nights on a shovel outside the door from sunset to sunrise, during which he was given foxglove to chew, and cold water was flung over him to banish the fire-devil. The screams of the child at night was frightful, calling on his mother to come and take him in; but the fairy doctor told the mother not to fear; the fairies were certainly tormenting him, but by the third night their power would cease, and the child, would be quite restored. However, on the third night the poor little child lay dead.

OMENS AND SUPERSTITIONS

AUGURIES and prophecies of coming fate may also be obtained from the flight of birds, the motion of the winds, from sneezing, dreams, lots, and the signs from a verse of the Psalter or Gospels. The peasantry attach great importance to the first verses of St. John's Gospel, and maintain that when the cock crows in the morning he is repeating these verses (from the 1st to the 14th), and if we understood the language of animals and birds, we could often hear them quoting these same verses.

A charm against sickness is an amulet worn round the neck, enclosing a piece of paper, on which is written the first three verses of St. John's Gospel.

OMENS THAT FOREBODE EVIL

To meet woman with red hair, or a woman with a red petticoat, the first thing in the morning.

To kill the robin redbreast.

To pass a churn and not give a helping hand.

To meet a funeral and not go back three steps with it.

To have a hare cross your path before sunrise.

To take away a lighted sod on May days or churning days; for fire is the most sacred of all things, and you take away the blessing from the house along with it.

* * *

The Irish are very susceptible to omens. They say, "Beware of a childless woman who looks fixedly at your child."

Fire is the holiest of all things. Walk three times round a fire on St. John's Eve, and you will be safe from disease for all that year.

It is particularly unlucky to meet a red-haired man the first thing in the morning. There is a tradition that Judas Iscariot had red hair, and it is from this the superstitious dread of the evil interference of a red-haired man may have originated.

Never begin work on a Friday.

Never remove from a house or leave a situation on Saturday.

Never begin to make a dress on Saturday, or the wearer will die within the year.

Never mend a rent in a dress while on, or evil and malicious reports will be spread about you.

Some days are unlucky to certain families--as Tuesday to the Tudors. Henry VIII., Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth all died upon a Tuesday.

To throw a slipper after a party going a journey is lucky. Also to breakfast by candle-light on Christmas morning.

It is fatal at a marriage to tie a knot in a red handkerchief, and only an enemy would do it. To break the spell, the entire handkerchief should be burned.

The first days of the year and of the week are the luckiest. Never begin a journey on a Friday or Saturday, nor move from your residence, nor change a situation. Never cut out a dress or begin to make it on a Friday, nor fix a marriage, for of all days the fairies have the most malific power on a Friday. They are present then, and hear all that is said, therefore beware of speaking ill of them, for they will work some evil if offended.

Never pay away money on the first Monday of the year, or you will lose your luck in gaining money all the year after.

Presents may be given on New Year's Day, but no money should be paid away.

Those who marry in autumn will die in spring.

The yew-tree, the ash, and the elder-tree were sacred. The willow has a mystery in it of sound. The harp of King Brian-Boru was made of willow-wood.

When a servant leaves her place, if her mistress gives her a piece of bread let her put by some of it carefully, for as long as she has it good luck will follow her.

TO ATTRACT BEES

Gather foxglove, raspberry leaves, wild marjorum, mint, camomile, and valerian; mix them with butter made on May Day, and let the herbs also be gathered on May Day. Boil them all together with honey; then rub the vessel into which the bees should gather, both inside and out, with the mixture; place it in the middle of a tree, and the bees will soon come. Foxglove or "fairy fingers" is called "the great herb" from its wondrous properties.

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE ISLANDS

Concerning the Dead

IT is ill luck when going with a funeral to meet a man on a white horse. No matter how high the rank of the rider may be, the people must seize the reins and force him to turn back and join the procession at least for a few yards.

The three most powerful divinations are by fire, by water, and by clay. These are the three great powers--the power that ascends, which is fire; the power that falls, which is water; and the power that lies level on the earth, and has the mystery of the dead, which is clay,

If a short cut should be taken while carrying a corpse to the grave the dead will be disturbed in the coffin, for it is a slight and an insult to the corpse.

When a death was expected it was usual to have a good deal of bread ready baked in the house in order that the evil spirits might be employed eating it, and so let the soul of the dying depart in peace. Twelve candles stuck in clay should also be placed round the dying.

If two funerals meet at the same churchyard, the last corpse that enters will have to supply the dead with water till the next corpse arrives.

Never take a child in your arms after being at a wake where a corpse was laid out unless you first dip your hands in holy water.

The moment the soul leaves the body the evil spirits try to seize but the guardian angel fights against them, and those around must pray earnestly that the angel may conquer. After death the body must not be disturbed, nor should the funeral chant be raised for one hour.

There are many superstitions prevalent in the Western Islands which are implicitly believed and acted on. Fishermen when going to sea must always enter the boat by the right side, no matter how inconvenient.

A coal of fire thrown after the fisherman brings him good fortune.

A sick person must not be visited on a Friday, nor by any person who has just quitted a wake and looked upon the dead. The hair and nails of a sick person must not be cut till after recovery..

If a corpse falls to the ground the most fatal events will happen to the family.

The lid must not be nailed on the coffin of a new-born child, or the mother that bore it will never have another.

MYSTERIES OF FAIRY POWER

The Evil Stroke

SOME persons are possessed naturally with the power of the Evil Stroke, but it is not considered at all so unlucky as the Evil Eye; for the person who has it does not act from intentional malice but from necessity, from a force within him which acts without his will, and often to his deep regret: as in hurling matches, where a chance stroke of his may do serious injury, and even the dust of the earth raised by his foot has blinded his opponent for a week.

One day a young man, while wrestling with another in play at a fair, where they met by chance, struck him on the arm, which immediately became fixed and powerless as stone. His friends brought him home, but nothing would restore the power of the arm or bring back the life; so after he had lain in this state for three days his family sent for the young man who had struck him, to ask for his help. When, he came and saw the arm stiff as stone, he anointed it all over with spittle, making also the sign of the cross; and after some time the arm began to move again with life, and finally was quite restored. But the young man of the Evil Stroke was so dismayed at this proof of the strange power in him, that he would never again join in sports for fear of some unlucky accident.

The power, however, is sometimes very useful, as in the case of attack from a bull or a ferocious dog; for a touch from the hand of a person

possessing the Evil Stroke at once quells the madness in the animal, who will crouch down trembling with fear, and become as incapable of doing injury as if suddenly and powerfully mesmerized.

But the power does not come by volition, only at intervals; and the person possessing it does not himself know the moment when it can be effectively exercised.

Women, also, have the mysterious gift of this strange occult force, and one young girl was much dreaded in the country in consequence; for anything struck by her, beast or man, became instantly paralyzed, as if turned to stone. One day, at a hurling match, she threw a lump of clay at the winner in anger, because her own lover had failed to win the prize. Immediately the young victor fell down stunned and lifeless, and was so carried his mother. Then they sent in all haste for the young girl to restore him to consciousness; but she was so frightened at her own evil work that she went and hid herself. Finding it then impossible to bring her, his friends sent for the fairy doctor, who, by dint of many charms and much stroking, at last restored the young man to life. The girl, however, was in such dread of the curses of the mother, that she fled, and took service in a distant part of the country. And all the people rejoiced much over her departure from amongst them.

Yet it was considered lucky in some ways to have a fairy-stricken child in the house, for the fairies generally did a good turn by the family to compensate for the evil. And so there was always plenty of butter in the churn, and the cattle did not sicken wherever there was a stricken child.

* * *

It is also lucky to employ a half-simpleton about the farm, and to be kind to the deaf and dumb, and other afflicted creatures. No one in Ireland would harm them or turn them out of their way, and they always get food and drink for the asking, without any payment being thought of or accepted.

THE FAIRY DOCTOR

If a healthy child suddenly droops and withers, that child is fairy-struck, and a fairy doctor must be at once called in. Young girls also, who fall into rapid decline, are said to be fairy-struck; for they are wanted in Fairy-land as brides for some chief or prince, and so they pine away without visible cause till they die.

The other malign influences that act fatally on life are the Wind and the Evil Eye. The evil power of the Wind is called a fairy-blast; while, of one suffering from the Evil Eye, they say he has been "overlooked."

The fairy doctor must pronounce from which of these three causes the patient is suffering. The fairy-stroke, or the fairy-bleat, or the Evil Eye; but he must take no money for the opinion given. He is paid in some other way; by free gracious offerings in gratitude for help given.

A person who visited a great fairy doctor for advice, thus describes the process of cure at the interview:-

"The doctor always seems as if expecting you, and had full knowledge of your coming. He bids you be seated, and after looking fixedly on your face for some moments, his proceedings begin. He takes three rods of witch hazel, each three inches long, and marks them separately, 'For the Stroke,' 'For the Wind,' 'For the Evil Eye.' This is to ascertain from which of these three evils you suffer. He then takes off his coat, shoes, and stockings; rolls up his shirt sleeves, and stands with his face to the sun in earnest prayer. After prayer he takes a dish of pure water and sets it by the fire, then kneeling down, he puts the three hazel rods he had marked into the fire, and leaves them there till they are burned black as charcoal. All the time his prayers are unceasing; and when the sticks are burned, he rises, and again faces the sun in silent prayer, standing with his eyes uplifted and hands crossed. After this he draws a circle on the floor with the end of one of the burned sticks, within which circle he stands, the dish of pure water beside him. Into this he flings the three hazel rods, and watches the result earnestly. The moment one sinks he addresses a prayer to the sun, and taking the rod out of the water he declares by what agency the patient is afflicted. Then he grinds the rod to powder, puts it in a bottle which he fills up with water from the dish, and utters an incantation or prayer over it, in a low voice, with clasped hands held over the bottle. But what the words of the prayer are no one knows, they are kept as solemn mysteries, and have been handed down from father to son through many generations, from the most ancient times. The potion is then given to be carried home, and drunk that night at midnight in silence and alone. Great care must be taken that the bottle never touches the ground; and the person carrying it must speak no word, and never look round till home is reached. The other two sticks he buries in the earth in some place unseen and unknown. If none of the three sticks sink in the water, then he uses herbs as a cure. Vervain, eyebright, and yarrow are favourite remedies, and all have powerful properties known to the adept; but the words and prayers he utters over them are kept secret, and whether they are good or bad, or addressed to Deity or to a demon, none but himself can tell."

These are the visible mysteries of the fairy doctor while working out his charms and incantations. But other fairy doctors only perform the mysteries in private, and allow no one to see their mode of operation or witness the act of prayer.

If a potion is made up of herbs it must be paid for in silver; but charms and incantations are never paid for, or they would lose their power. A present, however, may be accepted as an offering of gratitude.

CHARM FOR THE FAIRY STROKE

THERE is a very ancient and potent charm which may be tried with great effect in case of a suspected fairy-stroke.

Place three rows of salt on a table in three lines, three equal measures to each row. The person performing the spell then encloses the rows of salt with his arm, leaning his head down over them, while he repeats the Lord's Prayer three times over each row--that is, nine times in all. Then he takes the hand of the one who has been fairy-struck, and says over it, "By the power of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, let this disease depart, and the spell of the evil spirits be broken! I adjure, I command you to leave this man [naming him]. In the name of God I pray; in the name of Christ I adjure; in the name of the Spirit of God I command and compel you to go back and leave this man free! AMEN! AMEN! AMEN!"

SACRED TREES

THE large old hawthorns, growing singly in a field or by an ancient well, are considered very sacred; and no one would venture to cut them down, for the fairies dance under the branches at night, and would resent being interfered with.

POPULAR NOTIONS CONCERNING THE SIDHE RACE

FROM the earliest ages the world has believed in the existence of a race midway between the angel and man, gifted with power to exercise a strange mysterious influence over human destiny. The Persians called this mystic race *Peris*; the Egyptians and the Greeks named them demons, not as evil, but as mysterious allies of man, invisible though ever present; capable of kind acts but implacable if offended.

The Irish called them the *Sidhe*, or spirit-race, or the *Feadh-Ree*, a modification of the word *Peri*. Their country is the *Tir-na-oge*, the land of perpetual youth, where they live a life of joy and beauty, never knowing disease or death, which is not to come on them till the judgment day, when they are fated to pass into annihilation, to perish utterly and be seen no more. They can assume any form and they make horses out of bits of straw,

on which they ride over the country, and to Scotland and back. They have no religion, but a great dread of the Scapular (Latin words from the Gospels written by a priest and hung round the neck). Their power is great over unbaptized children, and such generally grow up evil and have the evil eye, and bring ill luck, unless the name of God is instantly invoked when they look at any one fixedly and in silence.

All over Ireland the fairies have the reputation of being very beautiful, with long yellow hair sweeping the ground, and lithe light forms. They love milk and honey, and sip the nectar from the cups of the flowers, which is their fairy wine.

Underneath the lakes, and deep down in the heart of the hills, they have their fairy palaces of pearl and gold, where they live in splendour and luxury, with music and song and dancing and laughter and all joyous things as befits the gods of the earth. If our eyes were touched by a fairy salve we could see them dancing on the hill in the moonlight. They are served on vessels of gold, and each fairy chief, to mark his rank, wears a circlet of gold round his head.

The Sidhe race were once angels in heaven, but were cast out as a punishment for their pride. Some fell to earth, others were cast into the sea, while many were seized by demons and carried down to hell, whence they issue as evil spirits, to tempt men to destruction under various disguises; chiefly, however, as beautiful young maidens, endowed with the power of song and gifted with the most enchanting wiles. Under the influence of these beautiful sirens a man will commit any and every crime. Then when his soul is utterly black they carry him down to hell, where he remains for ever tortured by the demons to whom he sold himself.

The fairies are very numerous, more numerous than the human race. In their palaces underneath the hills and in the lakes and the sea they hide away much treasure. All the treasure of wrecked ships is theirs; and all the gold that men have hidden and buried in the earth when danger was on them, and then died and left no sign of the place to their descendants. And all the sold of the mine and the jewels of the rocks belong to them; and in the Sifra, or fairy-house, the walls are silver and the pavement is gold, and the banquet-hall is lit by the glitter of the diamonds that stud the rocks.

If you walk nine times round a fairy rath at the full of the moon, you will find the entrance to the Sifra; but if you enter, beware of eating the fairy food or drinking the fairy wine. The Sidhe will, indeed, wile and draw many a young man into the fairy dance, for the fairy women are beautiful, so beautiful that a man's eyes grow dazzled who looks on them, with their long hair floating like the ripe golden corn and their robes of silver gossamer; they have perfect forms, and their dancing is beyond all expression graceful; but if a man is tempted to kiss a *Sighoge*, or young fairy spirit, in the dance, he is lost for ever--the madness of love will fall on him,

and he will never again be able to return to earth or to leave the enchanted fairy palace. He is dead to his kindred and race for ever more.

On Fridays the fairies have special power over all things, and chiefly on that day they select and carry off the young mortal girls as brides for the fairy chiefs. But after seven years, when the girls grow old and ugly, they send them back to their kindred, giving them, however, as compensation, a knowledge of herbs and philtres and secret spells, by which they can kill or cure, and have power over men both for good and evil.

It is in this way the wise women and fairy doctors have acquired their knowledge of the mysteries and the magic of herbs. But the fairies do not always keep the mortal women in a seven years' bondage. They sometimes only take away young girls for a dance in the moonlight, and then leave them back in their own home lulled in a sweet sleep. But the vision of the night was so beautiful that the young girls long to dream again and be made happy with the soft enchantments of the music and dance.

The fairies are passionately fond of music; it is therefore dangerous for a young girl to sing when she is all alone by the lake, for the spirits will draw her down to them to sing to them in the fairy palace under the waves, and her people will see her no more. Yet sometimes when the moonlight is on the water, and the waves break against the crystal columns of the fairy palace far down in the depths, they can hear her voice, and they know that she is singing to the fairies in the spirit land beneath the waters of the lake.

There was a girl in one of the villages that could see things no one else saw, and hear music no one else heard, for the fairies loved her and used to carry her away by night in a dream to dance with the fairy chiefs and princes. But, above all, she was loved by Finvarra the king, and used to dance with him all night till sunrise though her form seemed to be lying asleep on the bed.

One day she told some of her young companions that she was going that night to a great fairy dance on the rath, and if they chose she would bring them and put a salve on their eyes so that they would see wonders.

The young girls went with her, and on coming to the rath she said--

"Now put your foot on my foot and look over my left shoulder, and you will see the king and queen and all the beautiful lords and ladies with gold bands round their heads dancing on the grass. But take care when you see them to make no sign of the cross, nor speak the name of God, or they will vanish away, and perhaps even your life would be in danger."

On hearing this the girls ran away in fear and terror without ever using the spell or seeing the fairies. But the other remained, and told her friends next day that she had danced all night to the fairy music, and had heard the sweetest singing, so that she longed to go back and live for ever with the spirits on the hill.

And her wish was granted, for she died soon after, and on the night of her death soft music was heard floating round the house, though no one

was visible. And it was said also that beautiful flowers grew on her grave, though no hand planted them there, and shadowy forms used to gather in the moonlight and sing a low chant over the place where she was laid.

The fairies can assume all forms when they have special ends in view, such as to carry off a handsome girl to Fairyland. For this purpose they sometimes appear at the village festivities as tall, dark, noble-looking gentlemen, and they wile away the young girls as partners in the dance by their grand air and the grace of their dancing. And ever after the young girl who has danced with them moves and dances with a special fairy grace, though sometimes she pines away and seems to die, but every one knows that her soul has been carried off to the *Tir-na-oge*, where she will be made the bride of the fairy king and live in luxury and splendour evermore.

Yet, though the fairies are fond of pleasure, they are temperate in their mode of living, and are besides honest in their dealings and faithful to their promises. If they borrow wine from the gentry they always repay it in blessings, and never indulge much in eating or drinking. But they have no objection to offer to mortals the subtle red wine at the fairy banquets, which lulls the soul to sleep and makes the reason powerless. The young men that they beguile into their fairy palaces become their bond-slaves, and are set to hard tasks. One man said he had marched with Finvarra's men all the way from Mayo to Cork, but there they had to leave him as they were going to Spain and could not take him across the sea on their white horses.

They also much desire the aid of a powerful mortal hand to assist them in their fairy wars, for they have often disputes and battles amongst themselves for the possession of some coveted rath or dancing ground.

Once a fairy prince came to a great chieftain of Connaught, one of the Kirwans, and begged for aid against a hostile fairy tribe that had invaded his territories. The required aid being given, the fairies and their mortal auxiliaries plunged into the lake and fought the enemy and conquered; after which the Connaught men returned to shore laden with rich presents of silver and gold and crystal wine-cups as the expression of gratitude from the fairy prince.

It is said that Kirwan of Castle Hackett, the great Connaught chief, also received a beautiful fairy bride on that occasion, and it is certain that all the female descendants of the family are noted for their beauty, their grace in dancing, and their sweet voices in speaking. Lady Cloncurry, mother of the present Lord Cloncurry, was of this race, and in her youth was the acknowledged leading beauty of the Irish Court and celebrated for the rare fascination of her manner and voice.



Part Two:

Blessings, Curses, Spells and Strange Magicks

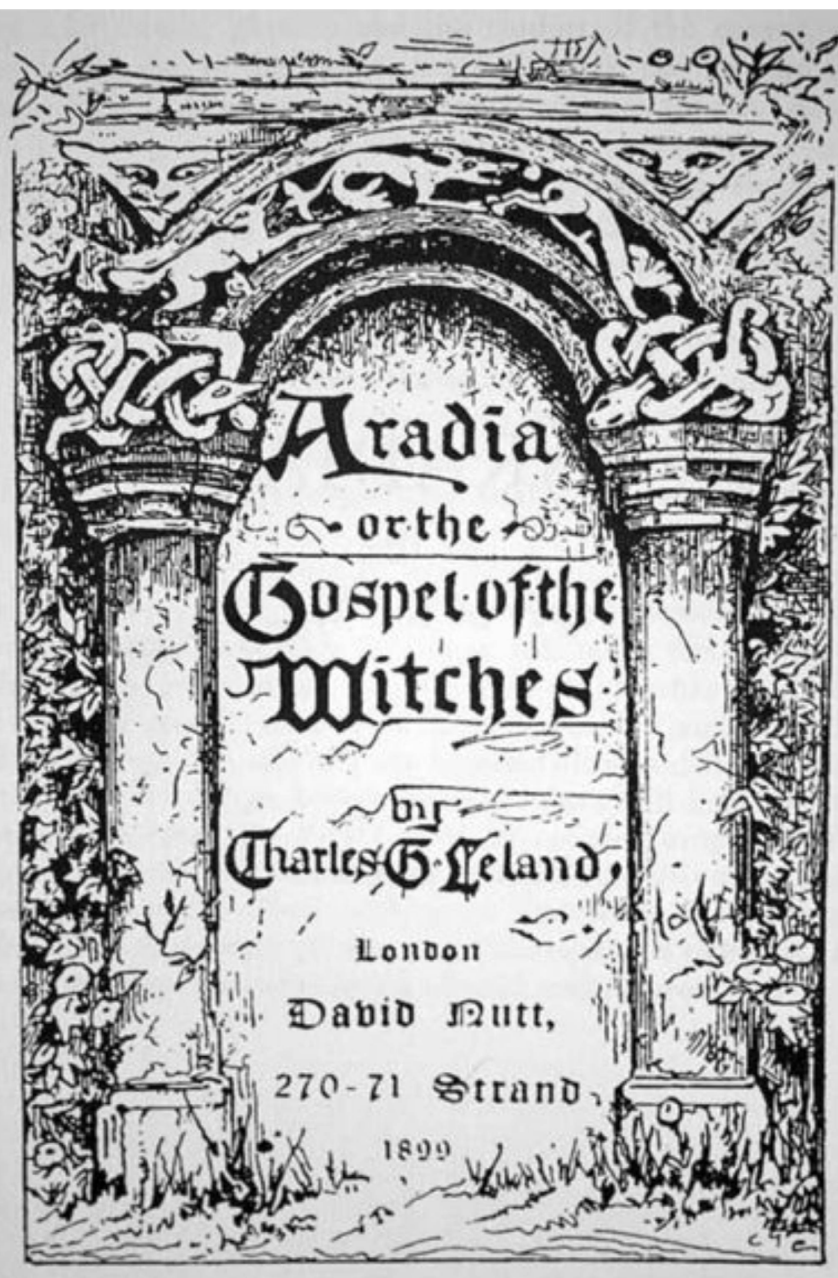
From

ARADIA

or the Gospel of the Witches

by Charles G. Leland

Original Publication, 1899



HOW DIANA GAVE BIRTH TO ARADIA (HERODIAS)

*"It is Diana! Lo!
She rises crescented."
--Keats' Endymion*

*"Make more bright
The Star Queen's crescent on her marriage night."
--Ibid.*

This is the Gospel (Vangelo) of the Witches:

Diana greatly loved her brother Lucifer, the god of the Sun and of the Moon, the god of Light (Splendor), who was so proud of his beauty, and who for his pride was driven from Paradise.

Diana had by her brother a daughter, to whom they gave the name of Aradia [i.e. Herodias].

In those days there were on earth many rich and many poor.

The rich made slaves of all the poor.

In those days were many slaves who were cruelly treated; in every palace tortures, in every castle prisoners.

Many slaves escaped. They fled to the country; thus they became thieves and evil folk. Instead of sleeping by night, they plotted escape and robbed their masters, and then slew them. So they dwelt in the mountains and forests as robbers and assassins, all to avoid slavery.

Diana said one day to her daughter Aradia:

*E vero che tu sei uno spirito,
Ma tu set nata per essere ancora.
Mortale, e tu devi andare
Sulla terra e fare da maestra
A donne e a' uomini che avranno
Volentà di inparare la tua scuola
Che sara composta di stregonerie.*

*Non devi essere come la figlia di Caino,
E della razza che sono divenuti
Scellerati infami a causa dei maltrattamenti,
Come Giudei e Zingari,
Tutti ladri e briganti,
Tu non divieni...*

*Tu sarai (sempre) la prima strega,
La prima strega divenuta nel mondo,
Tu insegnerai l'arte di avvelenare,
Di avvelenare (tutti) i signori,
Di farli morti nei loro palazzi,
Di legare il spirito del oppressore,
E dove si trova un contadino ricco e avaro,
Insegnare alle streghe tue alunne,
Come rovinare suo raccolto
Con tempesta, folgore e balen,
Con grandine e vento.*

*Quando un prete ti fara del male,
Del male colle sue bene di' Zioni,
Tu le farei (sempre) un doppio male
Col mio nome, col nome di Diana,
Regina delle streghe...*

*Quando i nobili e prete vi diranno
Dovete credere nel Padre, Figlio,
E Maria, rispondete gli sempre,
"IL vostro dio Padre e Maria
Sono tre diavoli...*

*Il vero dio Padre non e il vostro--
Il vostro dio--io sono venuta
Per distruggere la gente cattiva
E la distruggero....*

*"Voi altri poveri soffrite anche la fame,
E lavorato malo e molte volte;
Soffrite anche la prigione;
Ma pero avete una anima,
Una anima più buona, e nell'altra,
Nell'altra mondo voi starete bene,
E gli altri male." ...*

Translation:

*'Tis true indeed that thou a spirit art,
But thou wert born but to become again
A mortal; thou must go to earth below
To be a teacher unto women and men
Who fain would study witchcraft in thy school*

*Yet like Cain's daughter thou shalt never be,
Nor like the race who have become at last
Wicked and infamous from suffering,
As are the Jews and wandering Zingari,
Who are all thieves and knaves; like unto them
Ye shall not be....*

*And thou shalt be the first of witches known;
And thou shalt be the first of all i' the world;
And thou shalt teach the art of poisoning,
Of poisoning those who are great lords of all;
Yea, thou shalt make them die in their palaces;
And thou shalt bind the oppressor's soul (with power);
And when ye find a peasant who is rich,
Then ye shall teach the witch, your pupil, how
To ruin all his crops with tempests dire,
With lightning and with thunder (terrible),
And the hall and wind....*

*And when a priest shall do you injury
By his benedictions, ye shall do to him
Double the harm, and do it in the name
Of me, Diana, Queen of witches all!*

*And when the priests or the nobility
Shall say to you that you should put your faith
In the Father, Son, and Mary, then reply:
"Your God, the Father, and Maria are
Three devils....*

*"For the true God the Father is not yours;
For I have come to sweep away the bad,
The men of evil, all will I destroy!*

*"Ye who are poor suffer with hunger keen,
And toll in wretchedness, and suffer too
Full oft imprisonment; yet with it all
Ye have a soul, and for your sufferings
Ye shall be happy in the other world,
But ill the fate of all who do ye wrong!"*

Now when Aradia had been taught, taught to work all witchcraft, how to destroy the evil race (of oppressors) she (imparted it to her pupils) and said unto them:

*Quando io saro partita da questo mondo,
Qualunque cosa che avrete bisogna,
Una volta al mese quando la luna
E piena...*

*Dovete venire in luogo deserto,
In una selva tutte insieme,
E adorare lo spirito potente
Di mia madre Diana, e chi vorra
Imparare la stregonerie,
Che non la sopra,
Mia madre le insegnera,
Tutte cose....*

*Sarete liberi della schiavitù!
E cosi diverrete tutti liberi!
Pero uomini e donne
Sarete tutti nudi, per fino.
Che non sara morto l'ultimo
Degli oppressori e morto,
Farete il giuoco della moccola
Di Benevento, e farete poi
Una cena cosi:*

Translation.

*When I shall have departed from this world,
Whenever ye have need of anything,
Once in the month, and when the moon is full,
Ye shall assemble in some desert place,
Or in a forest all together join
To adore the potent spirit of your queen,
My mother, great Diana. She who fain
Would learn all sorcery yet has not won
Its deepest secrets, them my mother will
Teach her, in truth all things as yet unknown.
And ye shall all be freed from slavery,
And so ye shall be free in everything;
And as the sign that ye are truly free,
Ye shall be naked in your rites, both men
And women also: this shall last until
The last of your oppressors shall be dead;
And ye shall make the game of Benevento,
Extinguishing the lights, and after that
Shall hold your supper thus:*

THE SABBAT: TREGUENDA OR WITCH-MEETING -- How To Consecrate The Supper

Here follows the supper, of what it must consist, and what shall be said and done to consecrate it to Diana.

You shall take meal and salt, honey and water, and make this incantation:

Scongiurazione della Farina.

*Scongiuro te, o farina!
Che sei il corpo nostro--senza di te
Non si potrebbe vivere--tu che
Prima di divenire la farina,
Sei stata sotto terra, dove tutti
Sono nascosti tutti in segreti,
Macinata che siei a metterte al vento,
Tu spolveri per l'aria e te ne fuggi
Portando con te i tuoi segreti!*

*Ma quando grano sarai in spighe,
In spighe belle che le lucciole,
Vengeno a farti lume perche tu
Possa crescere più bella, altrimenti
Tu non potresti crescere a divenire bella,
Dunque anche tu appartieni
Alle Streghe o alle Fate, perche
Le lucciole appartengono
Al sol...
Lucciola caporala,
Vieni corri e vieni a gara,
Metti la briglia a la cavalla!
Metti la briglia al figliuolo del ré!
Vieni, corri e portala a mé!
Il figliuol del ré te lasciera andare
Pero voglio te pigliare,
Giache siei bella e lucente,
Ti voglio mettere sotto un bicchiere
E quardarti colla lente;
Sotto un bicchiere in starai
Fino che tutti i segreti,
Di questo mondo e di quell'altro non mi farai
Sapere e anche quelle del grano,
E della farina appena,*

*Questi segreti io saprò,
Lucciola mia libera ti lascieró
Quando i segreti della terra io sapró
Tu sia benedetta ti diro!*

Scongiurazione del Sale.

*Scongiuro il sale suona mezza giòrno,
In punto in mezzo a un fiume,
Entro e qui miro l'acqua.
L'acqua e al sol altro non penso,
Che a l'acqua e al sol, alloro
La mia menta tutta e rivolta,
Altro pensier non ho desidero,
Saper la verissima che tanto tempo é
Che soffro, vorrei saper il mio avenir,
Se cattivo fosse, acqua e sol
Migliorate il destino mio!*

The Conjuraton of Meal.

*I conjure thee, O Meal!
Who art indeed our body, since without thee
We could not live, thou who (at first as seed)
Before becoming flower went in the earth,
Where all deep secrets hide, and then when ground
Didst dance like, dust in the wind, and yet meanwhile
Didst bear with thee in flitting, secrets strange!*

*And yet erewhile, when thou wert in the ear,
Even as a (golden) glittering grain, even then
The fireflies came to cast on thee their light ¹
And aid thy growth, because without their help
Thou couldst not grow nor beautiful become;
Therefore thou dost belong unto the race
Of witches or fairies, and because
The fireflies do belong unto the sun....*

.

*Queen of the Fireflies! hurry apace, ²
Come to me now as if running a race,
Bridle the horse as you hear me now sing!
Bridle, O bridle the son of the king!
Come in a hurry and bring him to me!*

The son of the king will ere long set thee free!

*And because thou for ever art brilliant and fair,
Under a glass I will keep thee; while there,
With a lens I will study thy secrets concealed,
Till all their bright mysteries are fully revealed,
Yea, all the wondrous lore perplexed
Of this life of our cross and of the next.
Thus to all mysteries I shall attain,
Yea, even to that at last of the grain;
And when this at last I shall truly know,
Firefly, freely I'll let thee go!
When Earth's dark secrets are known to me,
My blessing at last I will give to thee!*

Here follows the Conjunction of the Salt.

Conjunction of the Salt.

*I do conjure thee, salt, lo! here at noon,
Exactly in the middle of a stream
I take my place and see the water round,
Likewise the sun, and think of nothing else
While here besides the water and the sun:
For all my soul is turned in truth to them;
I do indeed desire no other thought,
I yearn to learn the very truth of truths,
For I have suffered long with the desire
To know my future or my coming fate,
If good or evil will prevail in it.
Water and sun, be gracious unto me!*

Here follows the Conjunction of Cain.

Scongiurazione di Caïno.

*Tuo Caïno, tu non possa aver
Ne pace e ne bene fino che
Dal sole 1 andate non sarai coi piedi
Correndo, le mani battendo,
E pregarlo per me che mi faccia sapere,
Il mio destino, se cattiva fosse,
Allora me to faccia cambiare,*

*Se questa grazia mi farete,
L'acqua al lo splendor del sol la guardero:
E tu Caïno colla tua bocca mi dirai
Il mio destino quale sarà:
Se questa grazia o Caïno non mi farai,
Pace e bene non avrai!*

The Conjuraton of Cain.

*I conjure thee, O Cain, as thou canst ne'er
Have rest or peace until thou shalt be freed
From the sun where thou art prisoned, and must go
Beating thy hands and running fast meanwhile: ⁴
I pray thee let me know my destiny;
And if 'tis evil, change its course for me!
If thou wilt grant this grace, I'll see it clear
In the water in the splendour of the sun;
and thou, O Cain, shalt tell by word of mouth
Whatever this my destiny is to be.
And unless thou grantest this,
May'st thou ne'er know peace or bliss!*

Then shall follow the Conjuraton of Diana.

Scongiurazione a Diana.

You shall make cakes of meal, wine, salt, and honey in the shape of a (crescent or horned) moon, and then put them to bake, and say:

*Non cuoco ne il pane ne il sale,
Non cuoco ne il vino ne il miele,
Cuoco il corpo il sangue e l'anima,
L'anima di Diana, che non possa
Avere ne la pace e ne bene,
Possa essere sempre in mezzo alle pene
Fino che la grazia non mi farà,
Che glielo chiesta egliela chiedo di cuore!
Se questa grazia, o Diana, mi farai,
La cena in tua lode in molti la faremo,
Mangiaremo, beberemo,
Balleremo, salteremo,
Se questa grazia che ti ho chiesta,*

*Se questa grazia tu mi farai,
Nel tempo che balliamo,
Il lume spengnerai,
Così al l'amore
Liberamente la faremo!*

Conjuration of Diana.

*I do not bake the bread, nor with it salt,
Nor do I cook the honey with the wine,
I bake the body and the blood and soul,
The soul of (great) Diana, that she shall
Know neither rest nor peace, and ever be
In cruel suffering till she will grant
What I request, what I do most desire,
I beg it of her from my very heart!
And if the grace be granted, O Diana!
In honour of thee I will hold this feast,
Feast and drain the goblet deep,
We, will dance and wildly leap,
And if thou grant'st the grace which I require,
Then when the dance is wildest, all the lamps
Shall be extinguished and we'll freely love!*

And thus shall it be done: all shall sit down to the supper all naked, men and women, and, the feast over, they shall dance, sing, make music, and then love in the darkness, with all the lights extinguished: for it is the Spirit of Diana who extinguishes them, and so they will dance and make music in her praise.

And it came to pass that Diana, after her daughter had accomplished her mission or spent her time on earth among the living (mortals), recalled her, and gave her the power that when she had been invoked... having done some good deed... she gave her the power to gratify those who had conjured her by granting her or him success in love:

To bless or curse with power friends or enemies [to do good or evil].

To converse with spirits.

To find hidden treasures in ancient ruins.

To conjure the spirits of priests who died leaving treasures.

To understand the voice of the wind.

To change water into wine.

To divine with cards.

To know the secrets of the hand (palmistry).

To cure diseases.

To make those who are ugly beautiful.

To tame wild beasts.

Whatever thing should be asked from the spirit of Aradia, that should be granted unto those who merited her favour.

And thus must they invoke her:

Thus do I seek Aradia! Aradia! Aradia! ⁵ At midnight, at midnight I go into a field, and with me I bear water, wine, and salt, I bear water, wine, and salt, and my talisman--my talisman, my talisman, and a red small bag which I ever hold in my hand con dentro, con dentro, sale, with salt in it, in it. With the water and wine I bless myself, I bless myself with devotion to implore a favour from Aradia, Aradia.

Sconjurazione di Aradia.

*Aradia, Aradia mia!
Tu che sei figlia del più peggiore
Che si trova nell Inferno,
Che dal Paradiso fu discacciata,
E con una sorella, te ha creata,
Ma tua madre pentita del suo fallo,
A voluto di fare di te uno spirito,
Un spirito benigno,
E non maligno!*

*Aradia! Aradia! Tanto ti prego
Per l'amore che por ti ha tua madre,
E a l'amor tuo che tanto l'ami,
Ti prego di farmi la grazia,
La grazia che io ti chiedo
Se questa grazia mi farei,
Tre cose mi farai vedere,
Serpe strisciare,
Lucciola volare,*

*E rana cantare
Se questa grazia non mi farai,
Desidero tu non possa avere,
Avere più pace e ne bene,
E che da lontano tu debba scomodarti.
E a me raccomandarti,
Che ti obri... che tu possa torrnar
Presto al tuo destino.*

The Invocation to Aradia.

*Aradia! my Aradia!
Thou who art daughter unto him who was
Most evil of all spirits, who of old
Once reigned in hell when driven away from heaven,
Who by his sister did thy sire become,
But as thy mother did repent her fault,
And wished to mate thee to a spirit who
Should be benevolent,
And not malevolent!*

*Aradia, Aradia! I implore
Thee by the love which she did bear for thee!
And by the love which I too feel for thee!
I pray thee grant the grace which I require!
And if this grace be granted, may there be
One of three signs distinctly clear to me:
The hiss of a serpent,
The light of a firefly,
The sound of a frog!
But if you do refuse this favour, then
May you in future know no peace not- joy,
And be obliged to seek me from afar,
Until you come to grant me my desire,
In haste, and then thou may'st return again
Unto thy destiny. Therewith, Amen!*

THE CHARM OF THE STONES CONSECRATED TO DIANA

To find a stone with a hole in it is a special sign of the favour of Diana. He who does so shall take it in his hand and repeat the following, having observed the ceremony as enjoined:--

Scongiurazione della pietra bucata.

*Una pietra bucata
L'ho trovato;
Ne ringrazio il destin,
E lo spirito che su questa via
Mi ha portata,
Che passa essere il mio bene,
E la mia buona fortuna!*

*Mi alzo la mattina al alba,
E a passeggio me ne vo
Nelle valli, monti e campi,
La fortuna cercar vo
Della ruta e la verbena,
Quello so porta fortuna*

*Me lo tengo in senno chiuso
E saperlo nessuno no le deve,
E così ciò che commendo,
La verbena far ben per me!
Benedica quella strega!
Quella fàta che mi segna!"*

*Diana fu quella
Che mi venne la notte in sogno
E mi disse: "Se tu voir tener,
Le cattive persone da te lontano,
Devi tenere sempre ruta con te,
Sempre ruta con te e verbena!"*

*Diana, tu che siei la regina
Del cielo e della terra e dell'inferno,
E siei la prottetrice degli infelici,
Dei ladri, degli assassini, e anche
Di donne di mali affari se hai conosciuto,*

*Che non sia stato l'indole cattivo
Delle persone, tu Diana,
Diana il hai fatti tutti felici!*

*Una altra volta ti scongiuro
Che tu non abbia ne pace ne bene,
Tu possa essere sempre in mezzo alle pene,
Fino che la grazia che io ti chiedo
Non mi farai!*

Invocation to the Holy-Stone.

*I have found
A holy-stone upon the ground.
O Fate! I thank thee for the happy find,
Also the spirit who upon this road
Hath given it to me;
And may it prove to be for my true good
And my good fortune!*

*I rise in the morning by the earliest dawn,
And I go forth to walk through (pleasant) vales,
All in the mountains or the meadows fair,
Seeking for luck while onward still I roam,
Seeking for rue and vervain scented sweet,
Because they bring good fortune unto all.
I keep them safely guarded in my bosom,
That none may know it--'tis a secret thing,
And sacred too, and thus I speak the spell:
"O vervain! ever be a benefit,
And may thy blessing be upon the witch
Or on the fairy who did give thee to me!"*

*It was Diana who did come to me,
All in the night in a dream, and said to me:
"If thou would'st keep all evil folk afar,
Then ever keep the vervain and the rue
Safely beside thee!"*

*Great Diana! thou
Who art the queen of heaven and of earth,
And of the infernal lands--yea, thou who art
Protectress of all men unfortunate,
Of thieves and murderers, and of women too*

*Who lead an evil life, and yet hast known
That their nature was not evil, thou, Diana,
Hast still conferred on them some joy in life. ²*

*Or I may truly at another time
So conjure thee that thou shalt have no peace
Or happiness, for thou shalt ever be
In suffering until thou grantest that
Which I require in strictest faith from thee!*

Here we have again the threatening the deity, just as in Eskimo or other Shamanism, which represents the rudest primitive form of conjuring, the spirits are menaced. A trace of this is to be found among rude Roman Catholics. Thus when St. Bruno, some years ago, at a town in the Romagna, did not listen to the prayers of his devotees for rain, they stuck his image in the mud of the river, head downwards. A rain speedily followed, and the saint was restored in honour to his place in the church.

The Spell or Conjunction of the Round Stone.

The finding a round stone, be it great or small, is a good sign (e buono augurio), but it should never be given away, because the receiver will then get the good luck, and some disaster befall the giver.

On finding a round stone, raise the eyes to heaven, and throw the stone up three times (catching it every time), and say:--

*Spirito del buono augurio!
Sei venuto in mio soccorso,
Credi ne avevo gran bisogno,
Spirito del folletino rosso
Giacche sei venuto in mio soccorso,
Ti prego di non mi abbandonare!
Ti prego dentro questa palla d'intrare,
E nella mia tasca tu possa portare,
Così in qualunque mia bisogna,
In mio aiuto ti posso chiamare,
E di giorno e di notte,
Tu non mi possa abbandonare.*

*Se danari da qualchuno avanzaerò
E non mi vorrà pagare,
Tu folletino rosso me il farei dare!
Si questo di non darmeli,
Si in testera tu vi anderai
E col tua Brié--brié!*

*Se dorme to desterai,
Panni dal letto lacerai,
Le farai tanta paura
Che allora di andare a dormire,
Andra alle bische a giuocare,
E tu nunca lo seguirai.*

*E tu col tuo Brié-brié, le dirai,
Chi non paga deliti
Avranno pene e guai.*

*Così il debitare il giorno appresso,
O mi porterà i danari,
O mi il manderà;
E così, folletino rosso!
Mi farai felice in mia vita,
Perché in qualunque mia bisogna,
Verrai in mio soccorso!*

*Se colla mia amante sarò adirato,
Tu spirito del buon augurio mio!
Andrai la notte da lei
Per i capelli la prenderai,
E nel letto mio la porterai;
E la mattina quando tutti gli spiriti
Vanno a riposare,
Tu prima di sì entrare
Nella tua palla si porterai
La mia bella nel suo letto,
Così te prego folletino,
Di entrare in questa mia palla!*

*E di ubbidire a tutti miei comandi!
Ed io ti porterò
Sempre nella tasca mia,
Che tu non mi vada via.*

The Conjurati.

*Spirit of good omen,
Who art come to aid me,
Believe I had great need of thee.
Spirit of the Red Goblin,*

*Since thou hast come to aid me in my need,
I pray of thee do not abandon me:
I beg of thee to enter now this stone,
That in my pocket I may carry thee,
And so when anything is needed by me,
I can call unto thee: be what it may,
Do not abandon me by night or day.*

*Should I lend money unto any man
Who will not pay when due, I pray of thee,
Thou the Red Goblin, make him pay his debt!
And if he will not and is obstinate,
Go at him with thy cry of "Brié--brié!"
And if he sleeps, awake him with a twitch,
And pull the covering off and frighten him!
And follow him about where'er he goes.*

*So teach him with thy ceaseless "Brié--brié!"
That he who obligation e'er forgets
Shall be in trouble till he pays his debts.
And so my debtor on the following day
Shall either bring the money which he owes,
Or send it promptly: so I pray of thee,
O my Red Goblin, come unto my aid!
Or should I quarrel with her whom I love,
Then, spirit of good luck, I pray thee go
To her while sleeping--pull her by the hair,
And bear her through the night unto my bed!
And in the morning, when all spirits go
To their repose, do thou, ere thou return'st
Into thy stone, carry her home again,
And leave her there asleep. Therefore, O Sprite!
I beg thee in this pebble make thy home!
Obey in every way all I command.
So in my pocket thou shalt ever be,
And thou and I will ne'er part company!*

The Conjuraton of the Lemon and Pins

Scongiurazione al Limone appuntato un Spille. Sacred to Diana.

A lemon stuck full of pins of different colours always brings good fortune.

If you receive as a gift a lemon full of pins of divers colours, without any black ones among them, it signifies that your life will be perfectly happy and prosperous and joyful.

But if some black pins are among them, you may enjoy good fortune and health, yet mingled with troubles which may be of small account. [However, to lessen their influence, you must perform the following ceremony, and pronounce this incantation, wherein all is also described. ^{1]}

The Incantation to Diana.

*Al punto di mezza notte
Un limone ho raccolto,
Lo raccolto nel giardino
Ho raccolto un limone,
Un arancio e un mandarino,
Cogliendo queste cose,
Cogliendo, io ho detto;
Tu, o Regina del sole
Delia luna e delle stelle,
Ti chiamo in mio ajuto
E con quanta forza ho a te scongiuro
Che una grazia tu mi voglia fare,
Tre cose ho raccolto nel giardino;
Un limone, un arancio,
E un mandarino; una
Di queste cose per mia fortuna,
Voglio tenere due
Di questi oggetti di mano,
E quello che dovra servirmi
Per la buona fortuna
Regina delle stelle:
Fa lo rimanare in mia mano!*

At the instant when the midnight came,
I have picked a lemon in the garden,
I have picked a lemon, and with it
An orange and a (fragrant) mandarin.
Gathering with care these (precious) things,
And while gathering I said with care:
"Thou who art Queen of the sun and of the moon
And of the stars--lo! here I call to thee!
And with what power I have I conjure thee
To grant to me the favour I implore!
Three things I've gathered in the garden here:
A lemon, orange, and a mandarin;
I've gathered them to bring good luck to me.
Two of them I do grasp here in my hand,
And that which is to serve me for my fate,
Queen of the stars!
Then make that fruit remain firm in my grasp.

Something is here omitted in the MS. I conjecture that the two are tossed without seeing them into the air, and if the lemon remains, the ceremony proceeds as follows. This is evident, since in it the incantation is confused with a prose direction how to act.

Saying this, one looks up at the sky, and I found the lemon in one hand, and a voice said to me--

"Take many pins, and carefully stick them in the lemon, pins of many colours; and as thou wilt have good luck, and if thou desirest to give the lemon to any one or to a friend, thou shouldst stick in it many pins of varied colours.

"But if thou wilt that evil befall any one, put in it black pins.

"But for this thou must pronounce a different incantation (thus)":--

*Dia Diana, a te scongiuro!
E te chiamo ad alta voce!
Che tu non abbia pace ne bene
Se non viene in mio aiuto
Domani al punto di mezzo giorno,
Ti aspetto a quello punto
Un bicchiere di vino porterò,
E una piccola lente al occhio
E dentro tredici spilli,
Spilli neri vi metterò,
E tu Diana tutti
I diavoli dell' inferno chiamerai,*

*E in compagnia del sole il manderai,
E tutto il fuoco dell'inferno preso di se
Lo porteranno, e daranno forza,
Al sole di farmi questo vino bollire,
Perche questi spilli possano arroventire,
E con questi il limone apunteró
Per non dare più pace,
E ne bene alla persona
Che questo limone le presenterò!*

*Se questa grazia mi farete,
Un segnale mi darete,
Dentro tre giorni,
Una cosa voglio vedere,
O vento, o acqua, o grandine,
Se questo segnale non avrò,
Piu pace Diana non te darò,
Tanto di giorno che di notte,
Sempre ti tormenterò.*

The Invocation to Diana.

*Goddess Diana, I do conjure thee
And with uplifted voice to thee I call,
That thou shalt never have content or peace
Until thou comest to give me all thy aid.
Therefore to-morrow at the stroke of noon
I'll wait for thee, bearing a cup of wine,
Therewith a lens or a small burning-glass. ²
And thirteen pins I'll put into the charm;
Those which I put shall all indeed be black,
But thou, Diana, thou wilt place them all!*

*And thou shalt call for me the fiends from hell;
Thou'lt send them as companions of the Sun,
And all the fire infernal of itself
Those fiends shall bring, and bring with it the, power
Unto the Sun to make this (red) wine boil, ³
So that these pins by heat may be red-hot,
And with them I do fill the lemon here,
That unto her or him to who 'tis given is
Peace and prosperity shall be unknown.*

If this grace I gain from thee

*Give a sign, I pray, to me!
Ere the third day
Shall pass away,
Let me either hear or see
A roaring wind, a rattling rain,
Or hall a clattering on the plain;
Till one of these three signs you show,
Peace, Diana, thou shalt not know.
Answer well the prayer I've sent thee,
Or day and night will I torment thee!*

As the orange was the fruit of the Sun, so is the lemon suggestive of the Moon or Diana, its colour being of the lighter yellow. However, the lemon specially chosen for the charm is always a green one, because it "sets hard" and turns black. It is not generally known that orange and lemon peel, subjected to pressure and combined with an adhesive may be made into a hard substance which can be moulded or used for many purposes. I have devoted a chapter to this in an as yet unpublished work entitled One Hundred Minor Arts. This was suggested to me by the hardened lemon given to me for a charm by a witch.

A SPELL TO WIN LOVE

When a wizard, a worshipper of Diana, one who worships the Moon, desires the love of a woman, he can change her into the form of a dog, when she, forgetting who she is, and all things besides, will at once come to his house, and there, when by him, take on again her natural form and remain with him. And when it is time for her to depart, she will again become a dog and go home, where she will turn into a girl. And she will remember nothing of what has taken place, or at least but little or mere fragments, which will seem as a confused dream. And she will take the form of a dog because Diana has ever a dog by her side.

And this is the spell to be repeated by him who would bring a love to his home.¹

To day is Friday, and I wish to rise very early, not having been able to sleep all night, having seen a very beautiful girl, the daughter of a rich lord, whom I dare not hope to win. Were she poor, I could gain her with money; but as she is rich, I have no hope to do so. (Therefore will I conjure Diana to aid me.)

Scongiurazione a Diana.

*Diana, bella Diana!
Che tanto bella e, buona siei,
E tanto ti é piacere
Ti ho fatto,
Anche a te di fare al amore,
Dunque spero che anche in questa cosa
Tu mi voglia aiutare,
E se tu vorrai
Tutto tu potrai,
Se questa grazia mi vorrai fare:
Chiamerai tua figlia Aradia,
Al letto della bella fanciulla
La mandera Aradia,
La fanciulla in una canina convertira,
Alla camera mia la mandera,
Ma entrata in camera mia,
Non sara più una canina,
Ma tornerà una bella fanciulla,
Bella cane era prima,
E cosi potrò fare al amore
A mio piacimento,
Come a me piacerà.
Quando mi saro divertito
A mi piacere dirò.
"Per volere della Fata Diana,
E di sua figlia Aradia,
Torna una canina
Come tu eri prima!"*

Invocation to Diana.

*Diana, beautiful Diana!
Who art indeed as good as beautiful,
By all the worship I have given thee,
And all the joy of love which thou hast known,
I do implore thee aid me in my love!
What thou wilt 'tis true
Thou canst ever do:
And if the grace I seek thou'lt grant to me,
Then call, I pray, thy daughter Aradia,
And send her to the bedside of the girl,
And give that girl the likeness of a dog,*

*And make her then come to me in my room,
But when she once has entered it, I pray
That she may reassume her human form,
As beautiful as e'er she was before,
And may I then make love to her until
Our souls with joy are fully satisfied.
Then by the aid of the great Fairy Queen
And of her daughter, fair Aradia,
May she be turned into a dog again,
And then to human form as once before!*

Thus it will come to pass that the girl as a dog will return to her home unseen and unsuspected, for thus will it be effected by Aradia; and the girl will think it is all a dream, because she will have been enchanted by Aradia.

TO FIND OR BUY ANYTHING, OR TO HAVE GOOD FORTUNE THEREBY

An Invocation or Incantation to Diana.

The man or woman who, when about to go forth into the town, would fain be free from danger or risk of an accident: or to have good fortune in buying, as, for instance, if a scholar hopes that he may find some rare old book or manuscript for sale very cheaply, or if any one wishes to buy anything very desirable or to find bargains or rarities. This scongiurazione one serves for good health, cheerfulness of heart, and absence of evil or the overcoming enmity. These are words of gold unto the believer.

The Invocation.

*Siamo di Martedì e a buon ora
Mi voglio levare la buona fortuna,
Voglio andare e cercare,
E coll' aiuto della bella Diana,
La voglio trovare prima d'andare,
Prima di sortir di casa
Il malocchio mi leverò
Con tre goccioline d'olio, ¹
E te bella Diana io invoco
Che tu possa mandarmi via
Il malocchio da dosso a me
E mandala al mio più nemico!*

*Quando il malocchio
Mi sarò levato
In mezza alla via lo getterò,
Se questa grazia mi farei
Diana bella,
Tutti i campanelli
Di mia casa bene suonerai,
Allora contento di casa me ne andrò,
Perché col tuo aiuto (sarò) certo di trovare,
Buona fortuna, certo di trovare
Un bel libro antico,
E a buon mercato
Me lo farai comprare!*

*Tu stessa dal proprietario
Che avrà il libro
Te ne andrai tu stessa
Lo troverai e lo farei,
Capitare in mano al padrone,
E lo farai capitare
In mano al padrone,
E lo farai entrare
Nel cervello che se di quel libro
Non si disfara la scomunica,
Le porterà, così questo dell' libro,
Verrà disfarsi e col tuo aiuto,
Verrà portato alla mia presenza,
E a poco me lo venderà,
Oppure se è un manoscritto,
Invece di libro per la via lo getterà,
E col tuo aiuto verrà in mia presenza,
E potrò acquistarlo
Senza nessuna spesa;
E così per me
Sarà grande fortuna!*

To Diana.

*'Tis Tuesday now, and at an early hour
I fain would turn good fortune to myself,
Firstly at home and then when I go forth,
And with the aid of beautiful Diana
I pray for luck ere I do leave this house!*

*First with three drops of oil I do remove
All evil influence, and I humbly pray,
O beautiful Diana, unto thee
That thou wilt take it all away from me,
And send it all to my worst enemy!*

*When the evil fortune
Is taken from me,
I'll cast it out to the middle of the street:
And if thou wilt grant me this favour,
O beautiful Diana,
Every bell in my house shall merrily ring!*

*Then well contented
I will go forth to roam,
Because I shall be sure that with thy aid
I shall discover ere I return
Some fine and ancient books,
And at a moderate price.*

*And thou shalt find the man,
The one who owns the book,
And thou thyself wilt go
And put it in his mind,
Inspiring him to know
What 'tis that thou would'st find
And move him into doing
All that thou dost require.
Or if a manuscript
Written in ancient days,
Thou'lt gain it all the same,
It shall come in thy way,
And thus at little cost.
Thou shalt buy what thou wilt,
By great Diana's aid.*

The foregoing was obtained, after some delay, in reply to a query as to what conjuration would be required before going forth, to make sure that one should find for sale some rare book, or other object desired, at a very moderate price. Therefore the invocation has been so worded as to make it applicable to literary finds; but those who wish to buy anything whatever on equally favourable terms, have but to vary the request, retaining the introduction, in which the magic virtue consists. I cannot, however, resist the conviction that it is most applicable to, and will succeed best with, researches for objects of antiquity, scholarship, and art, and it should

accordingly be deeply impressed on the memory of every bric-à-brac hunter and bibliographer. It should be observed, and that earnestly, that the prayer, far from being answered, will turn to the contrary or misfortune, unless the one who repeats it does so in fullest faith, and this cannot be acquired by merely saying to oneself, "I believe." For to acquire real faith in anything requires long and serious mental discipline, there being, in fact, no subject which is so generally spoken of and so little understood. Here, indeed, I am speaking seriously, for the man who can train his faith to actually believe in and cultivate or develop his will can really work what the world by common consent regards as miracles. A time will come when this principle will form not only the basis of all education, but also that of all moral and social culture. I have, I trust, fully set it forth in a work entitled "Have you a Strong Will? or how to Develop it or any other Faculty or Attribute of the Mind, and render it Habitual," &c. London: George Redway.

The reader, however, who has devout faith, can, as the witches declare, apply this spell daily before going forth to procuring or obtaining any kind of bargains at shops, to picking up or discovering lost objects, or, in fact, to finds of any kind. If he incline to beauty in female form, he will meet with *bonnes fortunes*; if a man of business, bargains will be his. The botanist who repeats it before going into the fields will probably discover some new plant, and the astronomer by night be almost certain to run against a brand new planet, or at least an asteroid. It should be repeated before going to the races, to visit friends, places of amusement, to buy or sell, to make speeches, and specially before hunting or any nocturnal goings--forth, since Diana is the goddess of the chase and of night. But woe to him who does it for a jest!

TO HAVE A GOOD VINTAGE AND VERY GOOD WINE BY THE AID OF DIANA

*"Sweet is the vintage when the showering grapes
In Bacchanal profusion reel to earth,
Purple and gushing."*

--Byron, *Don Juan*, c. 124.

*"Vinum bonum et suave,
Bonis bonum, pravis prave,
O quam dulcis sapor--ave!
Mundana lætitia!"*

--Latin Songs, *E. du Meril*.

He who would have a good vintage and fine wine, should take a horn full of wine and with this go into the vineyards or farms wherever vines grow, and then drinking from the horn, say:--

*Bevo ma non bevo il vino,
Bevo il sangue di Diana,
Che da vino nel sangue di Diana
Si deve convertire,
E in tutte le mie viti
Lo spanderà,
E buona raccolta nu verra
E quando avro avuto buona raccolta,
Non saro ancora fuori di sciagura,
Perche il vino cattivo mi puol venire
Perche puol nascere l'uva
A luna vecchia...
E cosi il mio vino puole sempre andare
In malora--ma io bevendo
In questo corno, e bevendo il sangue,
Il sangue di Diana col suo aiuto
La mano alla Luna nuova io bacero,
Che la mia uva possa guardare,
Al momento che crea l'occhiolo
Alla crescenza del uva
E fino alla raccolta,
Che possa venire il mio vino buono,
E che si possa mantenere
Da prendere molti quattrini,
E possa entrare la buona fortuna
Nelle mi e vigne,
E nel miei poderi!
Quando il mio vino penderà
Di andare male, il corno prendero,
E forte, forte lo suonero,
Nel punto della mezza notte,
Dentro alla mia cantina lo suonero,
Lo suonero tanto forte
Che tu bella Diana anche da molto lontano,
Tu lo possa sentire,
E finestre e porte
Con gran forza tu possa spalancare,
A gran corsa tu mi possa venire,
A trovare, e tu possa salvarmi
Il mio vino, e tu possa salvare,
Salvare me da grande sciagura,*

*Perche se il mio vino a male andera
La miseria mi prendera.
E col tuo aiuto bella Diana,
Io saro salvato.*

*I drink, and yet it is not wine I drink,
I drink the blood of Diana,
Since from wine it has changed into her blood,
And spread itself through all my growing vines,
Whence it will give me good return in wines,
Though even if good vintage should be mine,
I'll not be free from care, for should it chance
That the grape ripens in the waning moon,
Then all the wine would come to sorrow, but
If drinking from this horn I drink the blood--
The blood of great Diana--by her aid--
If I do kiss my hand to the new moon,
Praying the Queen that she will guard my grapes,
Even from the instant when the bud is horn
Until it is a ripe and perfect grape,
And onward to the vintage, and to the last
Until the wine is made--may it be good!
And may it so succeed that I from it
May draw good profit when at last 'tis sold,
So may good fortune come unto my vines,
And into all my land where'er it be!
But should my vines seem in an evil way,
I'll take my horn, and bravely will I blow
In the wine-vault at midnight, and I'll make
Such a tremendous and a terrible sound
That thou, Diana fair, however far
Away thou may'st be, still shalt hear the call,
And casting open door or window wide,
Shalt headlong come upon the rushing wind,
And find and save me--that is, save my vines,
Which will be saving me from dire distress;
For should I lose them I'd be lost myself,
But with thy aid, Diana, I'll be saved.*

This is a very interesting invocation and tradition, and probably of great antiquity from very striking intrinsic evidence. For it is firstly devoted to a subject which has received little attention--the connection of Diana as the moon with Bacchus, although in the great *Dizionario Storico Mitologico*, by Pozzoli and others, it is expressly asserted that in Greece her worship was associated with that of Bacchus, Esculapius, and Apollo. The connecting link

is the *horn*. In a medal of Alexander Severus, Diana of Ephesus bears the horn of plenty. This is the horn or horns of the new moon, sacred to Diana. According to Callimachus, Apollo himself built an altar consisting entirely of horns to *Diana*.

The connection of the horn with wine is obvious. It was usual among the old Slavonians for the priest of Svantevit, the Sun-god, to see if the horn which the idol held in his hand was full of wine, in order to prophesy a good harvest for the coming year. If it was filled, all was right; if not, he filled the horn, drank from it, and replaced the horn in the hand, and predicted that all would eventually go well.¹ It cannot fail to strike the reader that this ceremony is strangely like that of the Italian invocation, the only difference being that in one the Sun, and in the other the Moon is invoked to secure a good harvest.

In the *Legends of Florence* there is one of the *Via del Corno*, in which the hero, falling into a vast tun or *tina* of wine, is saved from drowning by sounding a horn with tremendous power. At the sound, which penetrates to an incredible distance, even to unknown lands, all come rushing as if enchanted to save him. In this conjuration, *Diana*, in the depths of heaven, is represented as rushing at the sound of the horn, and leaping through doors or windows to save the vintage of the one who blows. There is a certain singular affinity in these stories.

In the story of the *Via del Corno*, the hero is saved by the Red Goblin or Robin Goodfellow, who gives him a horn, and it is the same sprite who appears in the conjuration of the Round Stone, which is sacred to Diana. This is because the spirit is nocturnal, and attendant on Diana Titania.

Kissing the hand to the new moon is a ceremony of unknown antiquity, and Job, even in his time, regarded it as heathenish and forbidden which always means antiquated and out of fashion--as when he declared (xxx. 26, 27), "If I beheld the moon walking in brightness... and my heart hath been secretly enticed or my mouth hath kissed my hand... this also were an iniquity to be punished by the Judge, for I should have denied the God that is above." From which it may or ought to be inferred that Job did not understand that God made the moon and appeared in all His works, or else he really believed the moon was an independent deity. In any case, it is curious to see the old forbidden rite still living, and as heretical as ever.

The tradition, as given to me, very evidently omits a part of the ceremony, which may be supplied from classic authority. When the peasant performs the rite, he must not act as once a certain African, who was a servant of a friend of mine, did. The coloured man's duty was to pour out every morning a libation of rum to a fetish and he poured it down his own throat. The peasant should also sprinkle the vines, just as the Devonshire farmers, who observed all Christmas ceremonies, sprinkled, also from a horn, their apple-trees.

Part Three

**Incantations and Specimens
of Medical Magic from**

GYPSY SORCERY and FORTUNE TELLING

by Charles Godfrey Leland

Original Publication, 1891



CHARMS AND CONJURATIONS TO CURE THE DISORDERS OF GROWN PEOPLE

FEVER

THOUGH not liable to many disorders, the gypsies in Eastern Europe, from their wandering, out-of-doors life, and camping by marshes and pools where there is malaria, suffer a great deal from fevers, which in their simple system of medicine are divided into the *shilale*--i.e., chills or cold--and the *tate shilalyi*, "hot-cold," or fever and ague. For the former, the following remedy is applied: Three lungs and three livers, of frogs are dried and powdered and drunk in spirits, after which the sick man or woman says

"Čuckerdya pal m're per
Čáven save miseče!
Čuckerdya pal m're per
Den misečeske drom odry prejiál!

"Frogs in my belly
Devour what is bad
Frogs in my belly
Show the evil the way out!"

By "the evil" is understood evil spirits. According to the old Shamanic belief, which was the primæval religion of all mankind, every disease is caused by an evil spirit which enters the body and can only be driven out by magic

Another cure against the fever is to go to a running stream and cast pieces of wood nine times backwards into the running water, repeating the rhymes:--

"Shilályi prejiá,
Páñori me tut 'dáv!
Náñi me tut kámáv
Andakode prejiá,
Odoy tut čučiden,
Odoy tut ferinen,
Odoy tut may kámen
Mashurdalo sastyár!"

Fever go away from me,
I give it, water, unto thee

Unto me thou art not dear,
Therefore go away from here
To where they nursed thee,
Where they shelter thee,
Where they love thee,
Mashurdalo--help!"

Another cure for a fever. The sufferer goes in the forest and finds a young tree. When the first rays of the rising sun fall on it the patient shakes it with all his might and exclaims:--

"Shilályi, shilályi prejia
Káthe tu beshá, káthe tu beshá!

"Fever, fever, go away!
Here shalt thou stay. Here shalt thou stay!"

It is here plain that the shaking the sapling is intended to transfer the shakes, as the chill and shuddering of the fever is called in America, to the tree.

"Then the fever passes into the tree." Perhaps it was in this way that the aspen learned to tremble. But among the gypsies in the south of Hungary, among whom the vaccination or inoculation of trees is greatly the fashion, a hole is bored into the wood, into which the patient spits thrice, repeats the spell, and then stops the hole with a plug. The boring of holes in trees or transferring illness to them is also practised without formulas of speech. Thus, if while a man is lying down or sitting in the spring he hears the song of the cuckoo he believes that he will be ill all the time for a year to come, especially with fevers, unless he goes. nine times to a tree, bores a hole in it, and spits into it three times. Then he is safe. In German mythology "the cuckoo is a bird which brings bad luck" (FRIEDRICH), and the inhabitants of Haiterbach were so persuaded of this that they introduced a prayer against it into their church service, whence they got the name of cuckoos (WOLF, "Zeitschrift für Deutsche Myth," Vol. i. p. 440). It announces to men the infidelity of wives, and tells listeners how many years they have to live.

It is possible that this is a relic of an old form of sacrifice, or proof that the idea occurs to all men of thus making a casket of a tree. The occasional discovery of stone axe-heads in very old trees in America renders this probable. And where the wood grows up and encloses the object it would very rarely happen that it would ever be discovered. It should be added to the previous instance that when they have closed the hole, the Transylvanian gypsies eat some of the bark of the next tree.

Another cure for fever is effected by going in the morning before sunrise to the bank of a stream, and digging a hole with some object--for instance, a

knife--which has never been used. Into this hole the patient makes water, then fills up the hole, saying:--

"Shilályi áč kathe
Ná ává kiyá mánge!
Sutyará andré čik!
Avá kiyá mánge
Káná káthe ná hin páñi!"

"Fever stay here!
Do not come to me!
Dry up in dust,
Come unto me
When no water is here."

Dr. WLISLOCKI translates this last line, "When there is no more water in the river," which is certainly what is meant. "While water uns or grass grows," &c. is a formula common to all countries.

Another cure for fever is this: the patient must take a kreutzer, an egg, and a handful of salt, and before sunrise go with them to a cross-road, throw them away backwards, and repeat:--

"Káná ádalá kiyá mánge áven
Âvâ tu kiyá mánge shilályi."

"When these things again I see,
Fever then return to me."

Or literally, "When these things to me come." For the next three days the invalid must not touch money, eggs, or salt. There is an old MS. collection of English charms and ceremonies, professedly of "black witchcraft," in which we are told that if a girl will walk stark-naked by the light of the full moon round a field or a house, and cast behind her at every step a handful of salt, she will get the lover whom she desires. Salt, says MORESINUS, was sacred to the infernal deities, and it was a symbol of the soul, or of life, because it preserved the body while in it (PITISCUS, "Leg. Ant. Rom." ii. p. 675). The devil never eats salt. Once there was in Germany a peasant who had a witch for a wife, and the devil invited them to supper. But all the dishes were without any seasoning, and the peasant, despite all nudges and hints to hold his tongue kept crying for salt. And when it was brought and he said, "Thank God, here is salt at last!" the whole *Spuck*, or ghastly scene, vanished (HORST, "Dæmonomagie," Frankfurt, 1818, vol. ii. p. 213). For a great deal of further information and symbolism on and of salt, including all the views of the ancient Rabbis and modern rationalists on the subject of Lot's wife,

the reader may consult "Symbolik und Mythologie der Natur," by J. B. FRIEDRICH, Wurzburg, 1859: "Salt is put into love-philtres and charms to ensure the duration of an attachment; in some Eastern countries it is carried in a little bag as an amulet to preserve health."

Another cure for fever. The patient must drink, from a new jug, water from three brooks, and after every drink throw into the running stream a handful of salt. Then he must make water into the first and say —

"Káthe hin t'ro sherro!"

"Here is thy head!"

At the second he repeats the sacred ceremony and murmurs

"Káthe hin t'ro perá!"

"Here is thy belly!"

And again at the third he exclaims:--

"Te kathehin t're punrá.
Já átunci ándre páñi!"

"And here are thy feet.
Go now into the water!"

But while passing from one stream to another he must not look back once, for then he might behold the dread demon of the fever which follows him, neither must he open his mouth, except while uttering the charm, for then the fever would at once enter his body again through the portal thus left unclosed. This walking on in apprehension of beholding the ugly spectre will recall to the reader a passage in the "Ancient Mariner," of the man who walks in fear and dread,

"Nor turns around his head,
For well he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread."

BOILS

The wise wives among the gypsies in Hungary have many kinds of miraculous salves for sale to cure different disorders. These they declare are

made from the fat of dogs, bears, wolves, frogs, and the like. As in all fetish remedies they are said to be of strange or revolting materials, like those used by Canidia of yore, the witches of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, and of Burns in Tam O'Shanter.

When a man has been "struck by a spirit" there results a sore swelling or boil, which is cured by a sorceress as follows: The patient is put into a tent by himself, and is given divers drinks by his attendant then she rubs the sufferer with a salve, the secret of which is known only to her, while she chants:--

"Prejiá, prejiá, prejiá,
Kiyá miseçeske, ác odoy;
Trianda sapa the çaven tut,
Trianda jiuklá tut čingeren,
Trianda káčná tut čunáven!"
"Begone, begone, begone
To the Evil One; stay there.
May thirty snakes devour thee,
Thirty dogs tear thee,
Thirty cocks swallow thee!"

After this she slaughters a black hen, splits it open, and lays it on the boil. Then the sufferer must drink water from three springs or rivulets, and throw wood nine times into the fire daily until he is well. But black hens cost money, according to WLISLOCKI; albeit the gypsies, like the children of the Mist in "Waverley," are believed to be acquainted with a far more economical and direct method of obtaining such commodities. Therefore this expensive and high-class cure is not often resorted to, and when it is the sorceress generally substitutes something cheaper than poultry. It may be here observed that the *black* hen occurs frequently in mediæval witch-lore and legend as a demon-symbol (WOLF, "Niederländische Sagen," pp. 647, 650). Thus the bones of sorcerors turn into black hens and chickens, and it is well if your black hen dies, for if she had not you would have perished in her place. Black hens were walled up in castles as sacrifices to the devil, that the walls might long endure; hence the same fowl occurs in the arms of the family of Henneberg (NORK, "Mythologie der Volksagen," p. 381). The lore on this subject is very extensive.

HEADACHE

The following remedy against headache is in general use among Transylvanian gypsies. The patient's head is rubbed, and then washed, with vinegar or hot water while the following charm is repeated:

"Oh duk ándro m'ro shero
The o dád miseçesero,
Adá dikhel ákáná,
Man tu máy dostá, márdyás,
Miro shero tu márdyás!
Tu ná ač tu ándre me.
Já tu, já tu, já kere.
Káy tu miseç čučides,
Odoy, odoy sikoves!
Ko jál pro m'ro ushályin,
Adáleske e duk hin!"

Oh, pain in my head,
The father of all evil,
Look upon thee now!
Thou hast greatly pained me,
Thou tormentest my head,
Remain not in me!
Go thou, go thou, go home,
Whence thou, Evil One, didst suck,
Thither, thither hasten!
Who treads upon my shadow,
To him be the pain!"

It will be seen that the principle of treading on the tail of the coat practised in Ireland is much outdone by the gypsies who give a headache to any one who so much as treads on their shadows.

HAIR

In connection with these charms for the head we may find not less interesting those in reference to the hair, as given by the same authority, Dr. von WLISLOCKI. The greatest pains are taken to ensure even for the new-born child what is called a full head, because every one who dies bald is turned into a fish, and must remain in this form till he has collected as many hairs as would make an ordinary wig. But this lasts a long time, since he can find but a single hair every month or moon. The moon is in many ways connected in gypsy faith with the hair. He who sleeps bare-headed in its light will lose his hair, or else it will become white. To have a heavy growth a man must scoop up with his left hand water from a running brook, against the current, and pour it on his head.

Immediately after the first bathing of a newly-born child, and its anointing, its forehead and neck are marked with a semicircle--perhaps meant to indicate the moon--made with a salve called *barcali*, intended to promote the growth of the hair. A brew, or mess, is made from beans and the blood of a cow. Hairs are taken from the heads of the father and mother, which hairs are burnt to a powder and mixed with the brew. It is remarkable that the beans are only used for a boy, their object being to insure for him great virile or sexual power. "The bean," says FRIEDRICH ("Sym. d. N."), "is an erotic symbol, or one signifying sexual pleasure." Hence it was forbidden to the Egyptian priests, the Pythagoreans, the priests of Jupiter in Rome, and to the Jewish high priests on certain festivals. But if the child is a girl, the seeds of the pumpkin or sunflower are substituted for beans, because the latter would make her barren.

It is an old belief, and one widely spread, that if the witches or the devil can get a lock of anybody's hair, they can work him evil. The gypsies have the following articles of faith as regards hairs:--

Should birds find any, and build them into their nests, the man who lost them will suffer from headaches until, during the wane of the moon, he rubs his head with the yolk of eggs and washes it clean in running water. It would be very curious if this method of cleaning the hair and giving it a soft gloss, so much in vogue among English ladies, should have originated in sorcery. Beyond this, the sufferer must mix some of his hairs with food and give them to a white dog to eat.

If hairs which have fallen or been cut away are found by a snake and carried into its hole, the man from whom they came will continue to lose more until those in the snake's nest are quite decayed.

If you see human hairs in the road do not tread on them, since, in that case, if they came from a lunatic, you, too, will go mad. According to MARCELLUS BURDIGALENSIS, if you pick up some hairs in the road just before entering a city gate, tie one to your own head, and, throwing the rest away, walk on without looking behind you, you can cure a headache. I have found nearly the same charm for the same purpose in Florence, but accompanied by the incantation which is wanting in MARCELLUS. Also his cure for headache with ivy from the head of a statue, which is still used in Tuscany with the incantation which the Roman omits.

Finding a hair hanging to your coat, carefully burn it, since you may by so doing escape injury by witchcraft. And we may remark in confirmation of this, that when you see a long hair on a man's coat it is an almost certain sign that he has been among the witches, or is bewitched; as the Countess thought when she found one clinging to the button of her lover, Von Adelstein, as set forth in "Meister Karl's Sketch-book."

But to bewitch your enemy get some of his combed-out hair, steep it in your own water, and then throw it on his garments. Then he will have no

rest by night or day. I have observed that in all the Tuscan charms intended to torment a foe, the objects employed are like this of a disgusting nature.

If a wife will hold her husband to her in love, she must take of her own hair and bind it to his. This must be done three times by full moonlight.

Or if a maid will win the love of a young man, she must take of her own hair, mix it with earth from his footsteps--"und mischt diese mit dem Speichel einer läufigen Hundinn auf"--burn the whole to powder, and so manage that the victim shall eat it--which, it is needless to say, it is not likely that he will do, knowing what it is. Earth from the footsteps of any one is regarded as a very powerful means of bewitching him in Italian and ancient sorcery.

If a man bind the combings of his hair to the mane of a strange horse it will be wild and shy till the hairs are removed.

For easy childbirth red hair is sewed in a small bag and carried on the belly next the skin during pregnancy. Red hair indicates good luck, and is called *bálá kámeskro*, or sun-hairs, which indicates its Indian origin.

If any one dreams much of the dead, let him sew some of his hair into an old shoe, and give it to any beggar. Thereby he will prevent evil spirits from annoying him.

If a child suffers from sleeplessness, some of its mother's hair should be sewed into its wrappings, and others pulverized, mixed with a decoction Of elderberries, be given it to drink. In German Folk-lore, as I shall show more fully anon, the elder often occurs as a plant specially identified with sorcery. In gypsy it is called *yakori bengeskro*, or the devil's eye, from its berries.

NAILS AND TEETH

Nails cut on Friday should be burned, and the ashes mingled with the fodder of cattle, who are thus ensured against being stolen or attacked by wild beasts. If children are dwarfish, the same ashes in their food will make them grow. If a child suffers from pains in the stomach, a bit of nail must be clipped from its every finger; this is mixed with the dried dung of a foal, and the patient exposed to the smoke while it is burned.

A child's first tooth must, when it falls out, be thrown into a hollow tree. Those which come out in the seventh year are carefully kept, and whenever the child suffers from toothache, one is thrown into a stream.

Teeth which have been buried for many years, serve to make a singular fetish. They are mingled with the bones of a tree-frog, and the whole then sewed up in a little bag. If a man has anything for sale, and will draw or rub this bag over it, he will have many offers or customers for the articles thus enchanted. The bones are prepared by putting the frog into a glass or earthen receptacle full of small holes. This is buried in an ant-hill. The ants

enter the holes and eat away all the flesh, leaving the bones which after a few weeks are removed.

To bear healthy and strong children women wear a string of bears' claws and children's teeth. Dr. von WLISLOCKI cites, *apropos* of this, a passage from JACOBUS RUEFF, "Von Empfengnussen": "Etlich schwanger wyber pflägend einen bären klauen von einem bären tapen yngefasset am hals zuo tragen" (Some women when with child are accustomed to wear mounted bears' claws on their necks). In like manner boars' teeth, which much resemble them, are still very commonly worn in Austria and Italy and almost over all Europe and the East. It is but a few days since I here, in Florence, met with a young English lady who had bought a very large one mounted in silver as a brooch, but who was utterly unaware that there was any meaning attached to it. I have a very ancient bear's tooth and whistle in silver, meant for a teething child. It came from Munich.

FOR PAIN IN THE EYES

Pain in the eyes is cured with a wash made of spring or well water and saffron. During the application the following is recited

"Oh dukh ándráł yákhá
Já ándré páñi
Já andráł páñi
Andre safráne
André pçuv.
Já andráł pçuv
Kiyá Pçuvusheske--
Odoy hin cerçá,
Odoy ja te ça."
Oh, pain from the eyes
Go into the water,
Go out of the water
Into the saffron,
Go out of the saffron
Into the earth.
To the Earth-Spirit.
There's thy home.
There go and eat."

Another. Especially for use against erysipelas, or St. Anthony's Fire.

The blood of a bullfinch is put into a new vessel with scraped elder-bark, and then laid on a cloth with which the eyes are bound up overnight. Meanwhile the patient repeats:--

"Duy yákhá hin mánge
Duy punrá hin mánge
Dukh ándrál yákhá
Já ándre punrá
Já ándrál punrá,
Já ándre pçuv,
Já ándrál pçuv
Andro meriben!"

"I have two eyes,
I have two feet,
Pain from my eyes
Go into my feet!
Go from my feet,
Go into the earth
Go from the earth
Into death!"

TOOTHACHE

To cure toothache the Transylvanian gypsies wind a barley-straw round a stone, which is thrown into a running stream, while saying:--

"Oh dukh ándre m're dándá,
Tu ná báres cingerá!
Ná ává kiyá mánge,
Mire muy ná hin kere!
Tut ñikáná me kámáv,
Ač tu mánge pál páčá;
Káná e pçus yárpakri
Avel tele páñori!"

"Oh, pain in my teeth,
Trouble me not so greatly!
Do not come to me,
My mouth is not thy house.
I love thee not all,
Stay thou away from me;

When this straw is in the brook
Go away into the water!"

STRAW MAGIC

Straw was anciently a symbol of emptiness, unfruitfulness, and death, and it is evidently used in this sense by the gypsies, or derived by them from some tradition connected with it. A feigned or fruitless marriage is indicated in Germany by the terms *Stroh Wittwer* and *Stroh Wittwe*. From the earliest times in France the breaking a straw signified that a compact was broken with a man because there was nothing in him. Thus in 922 the barons of Charles the Simple, in dethroning him, broke the straws which they held (CHARLOTTE DE LA TOUR, "Symbols of Flowers").

Still, straws have something in them. She who will lay straws on the table in the full moonlight by an open window, especially on Saturday night, and will repeat:--

"Straw, draw, crow crow,
By my life I give thee law"

then the straws will become fairies and dance to the cawing of a crow who will come and sit on the Jedge of the window. And so witches were wont to make a man of straw, as did Mother Gookin, in Hawthorne's tale, and unto these they gave life, whence the saying of a man of straw and straw bail, albeit this latter is deemed by some to be related to the breaking of straws and of dependence, as told in the tale of Charles the Simple. Straw-lore is extensive and curious. As in elder-stalks, small fairies make their homes in its tubes. To strew chopped straw before the house of a bride was such an insult to her character, in Germany, and so common that laws were passed against it. I possess a work printed about 1650, entitled "*De Injuriis quæ haud raro Novis Nuptis inferri solent. I. Per sparsionem dissectorum culmorum frugum.*" Germ. *Dusch das Werckerling Streuen,*" &c. An immense amount of learned quotation and reference by its author indicates that this custom which was influenced by superstition, was very extensively written on in its time. It was allied to the binding of knots and other magic ceremonies to prevent the consummation of marriages

INCANTATION AGAINST SWELLING AND SKIN ERUPTIONS

There is a very curious principle involved in curing certain disorders or afflictions by means of spells or verses. A certain word is repeated many times in a mysterious manner, so that it strikes the imagination of the sufferer. There is found in the Slavonian countries a woolly caterpillar called *Wolos*, whose bite, or rather touch, is much dreaded. I have myself, when a boy, been stung by such a creature in the United States. As I remember, it was like the sting of a bee. The following (Malo Russian) spell against it was given me by Prof. DRAGOMANOFF in Geneva. It is supposed that a certain kind of disorder, or cutaneous eruption, is caused by the *Wolos*:--

"Wolosni--Wolosnicéh!
Holy Wolos.
Once a man drove over empty roads
With empty oxen,
To an empty field,
To harvest empty corn,
And gather it in empty ricks. p. 33
He gathered the empty sheaves,
Laid them in empty Wagons,
Drove over empty roads,
Unto an empty threshing-floor.
The empty labourers threshed it,
And bore it to the empty Mill.
The empty baker (woman)
Mixed it in an empty trough,
And baked it in an empty oven.
The empty people ate the empty bread.
So may the Wolos swallow this disorder
From the empty ----- (here the name of the patient.)

What is here understood by "empty" is that the swelling is taken away, subtracted, or emptied, by virtue of the repetition of the word, as if one should say, "Be thou void. Depart! depart! depart! Avoid me!"

AGAINST FEVER

There is a very curious incantation also apparently of Indian-gypsy origin, since it refers to the spirits of the water who cause diseases. In this instance they are supposed to be exorcised by Saint Paphnutius, who is a

later Slavonian-Christian addition to the old Shamanic spell. In the Accadian-Chaldæan formulas these spirits are seven; here they are seventy.

The formula in question is against the fever:--

"In the name of God and his Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen!

"Seventy fair maids went up out of the ocean.

"They met the Saint Paphnutius, who asked:

"Whence come ye, oh Maidens?"

"They answered, 'From the ocean-sea.

"We go into the world to break the bones of men.

"To give them the fever. (To make hot and cold)."

Then the holy Paphnutius began to beat them, and gave them every one seventy-seven days:--

"They began to pray, 'O holy Paphnutius!

"Forgive us, (and) whoever shall bear with him (thy) name, or write it, him we will leave in peace.

"We will depart from him

"Over the streams, over the seas.

"Over the reeds (canes) and marshes.

"O holy Paphnutius, *sua misericordia*, of thy mercy,

"Have pity on thy slave, even on the sick man -----

(the name is here uttered).

"Free him from fever!"

TO CONSECRATE A SWARM OF BEES

The following gypsy-Slav charm, to consecrate a swarm of bees, was also given to me by Prof. DRAGOMANOFF, who had learned it from a peasant:-

"One goes to the water and makes his prayer and greets the water thus:--

"Hail to thee, Water!

Thou Water, *Oliana*!

Created by God,

And thou, oh Earth, Titiana!

And ye the near springs, brooks and rivulets,

Thou Water, *Oliana*,

Thou goest over the earth,

Over the neighbouring fountains and streams,

Down unto the sea,

Thou dost purify the sea,

The sand, the rocks, and the roots--

I pray thee grant me
Of the water of this lake,
To aid me,
To sprinkle my bees.
I will speak a word,
And God will give me help,
The all-holy Mother of God,
The mother of Christ,
Will aid me,
And the holy Father
The holy Zosimos, Sabbateus and the holy Friday
Parascabeah!

"When this is said take the water and bear it home without looking back.
Then the bees are to be sprinkled therewith."

CHARM AGAINST THE BITE OF A SERPENT.

"The holy Virgin sent a man
Unto Mount Sion,
Upon this mountain
Is the city of Babylon,
And in the city of Babylon
Lives Queen Volga.p. 36
Oh Queen Volga,
Why dost thou not teach
This servant of God
(Here the name of the one bitten
by a serpent is mentioned)
So that he may not be bitten
By serpents?"

(The reply of Queen Volga)
"Not only will I teach my descendants
But I also will prostrate myself
Before the Lord God."

"Volga is the name of a legendary heathen princess of Kief, who was baptized and sainted by the Russian Church. The feminine form, Olga, or Volga, corresponds to the masculine name Oleg, or Olg, the earliest legendary character of Kief. His surname was Viechtchig--the sage or sorcerer" (*i.e.*, wizard, and from a cognate root). "In popular songs he is called Volga, or Volkh, which is related to Volkv, a sorcerer. The Russian

annals speak of the Volkv of Finland, who are represented as Shamans." *Niya Predania i Raikazi* ("Traditions and Popular Tales of Lesser Russia," by M. DRAGOMANOFF, Kief, 1876) in Russian.

SPELL AGAINST NIGHT-CRAMP

"There is a mighty hill, and on this hill is a golden apple-tree,

"Under the golden apple-tree is a golden stool.

"On the stool--who sits there?

"There sits the Mother of God with Saint Maria; with the boxes in her right hand, with the cup in her left.

"She looks up and sees naught, she looks down and sees my Lord and Lady Disease.

"Lords and Ladies Cramp, Lord and Lady Vampire--Lord Wehrwolf and his wives.

"They are going to ----- (the sufferer), to drink his blood and put in him a foul heart.

"The Mother of God, when she saw them, went down to them, spoke to them, and asked them, 'Whither go ye, Lord and Lady Disease,--Lords and Ladies Cramp, &c.?'"

"We go to ----- to drink his blood, to change his heart to a foul one.'

"No, ye shall return; give him his blood back, restore him his own heart, and leave him immediately.'

"Cramps of the night, cramps of the midnight, cramps of the day, cramps wherever they are. From water, from the wind, go out from the brain, from the light of his face, from the hearing of the ears, from his heart, from his hands and feet, from the soles of his feet.

"Go and hide where black cocks never crow, [1](#) where men never go, where no beast roars.

"Hide yourself there, stop there, and never show yourself more!

"May ----- remain pure and glad, as he was made by God, and was fated by the Mother of God!

"The spell is mine--the cure is God's.

PRAYER OF ST. PAUL AGAINST SNAKES

"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. I once was a persecutor, but am now a true follower; and I went from my dwelling-place in Sicily, and they set light to a trunk, and a snake came therefrom and bit my right hand and hung from it. But I had in me the power of God, and I shook it off into the burning fire and it was destroyed, and I suffered no ill

from the bite. I laid myself down to sleep; then the mighty angel said: 'Saul, Paul, stand up and receive this writing'; and I found in it the following words:

"I exorcise you, sixty and a half kinds of beasts that creep on the earth, in the name of God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and in the name of the immovable throne.

"Serpent of Evil, I exorcise thee in the name of the burning river which rises under the footstool of the Saviour, and in the name of His incorporeal angels!

"Thou snake of the tribe of basilisks, thou foul-headed snake, twelve-headed snake, variegated snake, dragon-like snake, that art on the right side of hell, whomsoever thou bittest thou shalt have no power to harm, and thou must go away with all the twenty-four kinds. If a man has this prayer and this curse of the true, holy apostle, and a snake bites him, then it will die on the spot, and the man that is bitten shall remain unharmed, to the honour of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, now and for all time. Amen."

SPELL FOR THE TOOTHACHE

"Saint Peter sat on a stone and wept. Christ came to him and said, 'Peter, why weepest thou?' Peter answered, 'Lord, my teeth pain me.' The Lord thereupon ordered the worm in Peter's tooth to come out of it and never more go in again. Scarcely had the worm come out when the pain ceased. Then spoke Peter, 'I pray you, O Lord, that when these words be written out and a man carries them he shall have no toothache.' And the Lord answered, 'Tis well, Peter; so may it be!'"

CHARM AGAINST NOSE-BLEEDING

"Zachariah was slain in the Lord's temple, and his blood turned into stone. Then stop, O blood, for the Lord's servant, ----- I exorcise thee, blood, that thou stoppest in the name of the Saviour, and by fear of the priests when they perform the liturgy at the altar."

FIRE MAGIC

M. Kounavine, as set forth by Dr. A. Elysseeff (*Gypsy-Lore Journal*, July, 1890), gives a Russian gypsy incantation by which the fire is invoked to cure illness. It is as follows:--

"Great Fire, my defender and protector, son of the celestial fire, equal of the sun who cleanses the earth of foulness, deliver this man from the evil sickness that torments him night and day!"

The fire is also invoked to punish, or as an ordeal, *e.g.*:--

"Fire, who punishest the evil-doer, who hatest falsehood, who scorchest the impure, thou destroyest offenders; thy flame devoureth the earth. Devour ----- if he says what is not true, if he thinks a lie, and if he acts deceitfully."

These are pronounced by the gypsy sorcerer facing the burning hearth. There is another in which fire is addressed as Jandra, and also invoked to punish an offender:--

"Jandra, bearer of thunderbolts, great Periani (compare *Parjana*, an epithet of Indra, Slavonic *Perun*), bearer of lightning, slay with thy thunderbolt and burn with thy celestial fire him who dares to violate his oath."

CHILDBIRTH

When a mother begins to suffer the pangs of childbirth, a fire is made before her tent, which is kept up till the infant is baptized, in order to drive away evil spirits. Certain women feed this fire, and while fanning it (fans being used for bellows) murmur the following rhyme:--

"Oh yakh, oh yakh pçabuva,
Pçabuva,
Te çavéstár tu trada,
Tu trada,
Pçávushen te Nivashen
Tire tçuva the traden!
Laçe Urmen ávená,
Čaves báçtáles dena,
Káthe hin yov báçtáles,
Andre lime báçtáles!
Motura te ráná,
Te átunci but' ráná,
Matura te ráná,
Te átunci, but' rana,
Me dav' andre yákherá!
Oh yákh, oh yákh pçabuva,
Rovel čavo: áshuna!"

It may here be remarked that the pronunciation of all these words is the same as in German, with the following additions . Č = *teh* in English, or to *ch* in church. C = *ch* in German as in *Buch*. J = *azs*, or the English *j*, in James; ñ, as in Spanish, or *nj* in German, while *sh* and *y* are pronounced as in English. Á is like *ah*. The literal translation is

"Oh Fire, oh Fire, burn!
 Burn!
 And from the child (do) thou drive away
 Drive away!
 Pçuvuse and Nivashi
 And drive away thy smoke (pl.)
 (Let) good fairies come (and)
 Give luck to the child,
 Here it is lucky (or fortunate)
 In the world fortunate
 Brooms and twigs (fuel)
 Arid then more twigs,
 And then yet more twigs
 I put (give) to the fire.
 Oh fire, oh fire--burn!
 The child weeps: listen!"

In South Hungary the gypsy women on similar occasions sing the following charm:--

"Eitrá Pçuvushá, efa Niváshá
 André mal avená
 Pçabuvén, pçabuvén, oh yákhá!
 Dáyákri punro dindálen,
 Te gule čaves mudáren
 Pçabuvén, pçabuvén, oh yákhá;
 Ferinen o čaves te daya!"
 "Seven Pçuvushe, seven Nivasi
 Come into the field,
 Burn, burn, oh fire
 They bite the mother's foot,
 They destroy the sweet child;
 Fire, fire, oh burn!
 Protect the child and the mother!"

When the birth is very difficult, the mother's relations come to help, and one of them lets an egg fall, *zwischen den Beinen derselben*. On this occasion the gypsy women in Southern Hungary sing:--

"Anro, áno in obles,
Te e pera in obles:
Ava čavo sástávestes!
Devlá, devlá, tut akharel!"

The egg, the egg is round,
And the belly is round,
Come child in good health
God, God calls thee!"

If a woman dies in child-bed two eggs are placed under her arms and the following couplet is muttered:--

"Kana anro kirnes hin,
Kathe nañi tčudá him!"

"When this egg is (shall be) decayed,
Here (will be) is no milk!"

When the after-pains begin it is the custom with some of the gypsy tribes in the Siebenburgen to smoke the sufferer with decayed willow-wood which is burned for the purpose while the women in attendance sing:--

"Sik te sik o tču urál,
Te urál o čon urál!
Kana len hádjínáven
Sasčipená tut' áven;
Káná o tču ná urál--
Tute nañi the dukhal,
Tute náñi the dukhál."

"Fast and fast the smoke flies,
And flies, the moon flies,
When they find (themselves)
Health (yet) will come to thee,
When the smoke no (longer) flies
Thou wilt feel pain no more!"

When a gypsy woman is with child she will not, if she can help it, leave her tent by full moonshine. A child born at this time it is believed will make a happy marriage. So it is said of birth in the Western World:--

"Full moon, high sea,
Great man thou shalt be;
Red dawning, cloudy sky,
Bloody death shalt thou die.

"Pray to the Moon when she is round,
Luck with you will then abound,
What you seek for shall be found
On the sea or solid ground."

THE POWER OF GARLIC AND ONIONS

Among the Poles, garlic is laid under children's pillows to protect them from devils and witches. (BRATRANECK, *"Beiträge zur Ästhetik der Pflanzenwelt,"* p. 56). The belief in garlic as something sacred appears to have been very widely spread, since the Druids attributed magic virtues to it; hence the reverence for the nearly allied leek, which is attached to King David and so much honoured by the Welsh.

"Tell him I'll knock his leek about his pate
Upon Saint David's Day."

--SHAKESPEARE.

The magic virtues of garlic were naturally enough also attributed to onions and leeks, and in a curious Italian work, entitled "Il Libro del Comando," attributed (falsely) to Cornelius Agrippa, I find the following:--

"*Segreto magico d'indovinare, colle cipole, la salute d'una persona lontana.* A magic secret to divine with onions the health of a person far distant. Gather onions on the Eve of Christmas and put them on an altar, and under every onion write the name of the persons as to whom one desires to be informed, *ancorche non scrivano*, even if they do not write.

"The onion (planted) which sprouts the first will clearly announce that the person whose name it bears is well.

"And in the same manner we can learn the name of the husband or wife whom we should choose, and this divination is in use in many cantons of Germany."

Very much allied to this is the following love charm from an English gypsy:--

"Take an onion, a tulip, or any root of the kind (*i.e.* a bulbous root?), and plant it in a clean pot never used before; and while you plant it repeat the

name of the one whom you love, and every day, morning and evening, say over it

'As this root grows
And as this blossom blows,
May her heart be
Turned unto me!

"And it will come to pass that every day the one whom you love will be more and more inclined to you, till you get your heart's desire."

A similar divination is practised by sowing cress or lettuce seed in the form of names in gardens. If it grows well the one who plants it will win the love of the person indicated.

CHARMS AND CONJURATIONS TO CURE THE DISORDERS OF CHILDREN

AGAINST ENCHANTMENT BY THE EVIL EYE

What is greatly dreaded is the *Berufen*, or being called on, "enchanted," in English "overlooked," or subjected to the evil eye.

To learn whether a child has been overlooked, or evil-eyed, or enchanted, the "wise woman" takes it in her arms, and goes to the next running stream. There she holds the face of the babe as nearly as she can to the water, and repeats:--

"Páni, páni sikova,
Dikh the upré, dikh télé!
Buti páni sikovel
Buti pál yákh the dikhel
Te ákáná mudárel."

"Water, water, hasten!
Look up, look down
Much water hastens
(May) as much come into the eye
Which looked evil on thee,
And may it now perish."

If the running brook makes a louder sound than usual then it is supposed to say that the child is enchanted, but if it runs on as before then

something else is the matter, and to ascertain what it is other charms and ceremonies are had recourse to.

An universal remedy for enchantment is the following:--

A jar is filled with water from a stream, and it must be taken *with*, not against, the current as it runs. In it are placed seven coals, seven handfuls of meal, and seven cloves of garlic, all of which is put on the fire. When the water begins to boil it is stirred with a three-forked twig, while the wise woman repeats:--

"Miseç' yakhá tut dikhen,
Te yon káthe mudáren
Te átunci eftá coká
Te çaven miseçe yakhá;
Miseç' yakhá tut dikhen,
Te yon káthe mudáren
But práhestár e yakhá
Atunci kores th'ávená;
Miseç' yakhá tut dikhen
Te yon káthe mudáren
Pçábuvená pçábuvená
Andre develeskero yakhá!"

"Evil eyes look on thee,
May they here extinguished be
And then seven ravens
Pluck out the evil eyes p. 52
Evil eyes (now) look on thee.
May they soon extinguished be!
Much dust in the eyes,
Thence may they become blind,
Evil eyes now look on thee;
May they soon extinguished be!
May they burn, may they burn
In the fire of God!"

If it appears that the child is overlooked, or "berufen," many means are resorted to, "one good if another fails," but we have here to do only with those which are connected with incantations. A favourite one is the following: Three twigs are cut, each one from a different tree, and put into a pipkin which has been filled with water dipped or drawn *with*, not against, the current of a stream. Three handfuls of meal are then put in and boiled down to a *Brei*, or pudding. A horse hair is then wound round a needle, which is stuck not by the point but by the head into the inner bottom of a tube, which is filled with water, and placed upon this is the pipkin with the

pudding. Then the "overlooked," or evil-seen child is held over the tub while the following rhyme is chanted:

"Páñi, páñi lunjára,
Páñi, páñi isbiná;
Te náshválipen çucá
Náshválipen mudará,
Mudára te ákáná,
Káthe beshá ñikáná,
Sár práytiña sutyárel,
Káthe ándre piri, ándre piri,
Nivasheshe les dávás!"

"Water, water, spread
Water, water, stretch
And sickness disappear,
Sickness be destroyed,
Be destroyed now.
Remain not here at all
Who ever has overlooked this child
As this leaf in the pot (maybe)
Be given to the Nivashi!"

This is repeated nine times, when the water in the tub, with the pipkin and its contents, are all thrown into the stream from which the water was drawn.

Another spell for the purpose of averting the effects of the evil eye is as follows: The mother of the overlooked child fills her mouth with salt water, and lets it drop or trickle on the limbs of the infant, and when this has been done, repeats:

"Miseç yákhá tut dikhen
Sár páñori--
Mudaren!
Náshvalipen prejia:
Andral t'ro shero
Andral t're kolyin,
Andral t're per
Andral t're punrá
Andral t're vástá
Kathe prejánen,--
Andre yákhá yon jánen!"

"False (evil) eyes see thee,
Like this water
May they perish
Sickness depart
From thy head,
From thy breast,
From thy belly,
From thy feet
From thy hands,
May they go hence
Into the evil eyes!"

WHEN A CHILD REFUSES BREAST MILK

When a child refuses the breast the gypsies believe that a Pçuvus-wife, or a female spirit of the earth has secretly sucked it. In such a case they place between the mother's breasts onions, and repeat these words:--

"Pçuvushi, Pçuvushi,
Ac tu náshvályi
Tito tçud ač yakhá,
Andre pçuv tu pçábuvá!
Thávdá, thávdá miro tçud,
Thávdá, thávdá, parno tçud,
Thávdá, thávdá, sár kámáv,--
Mre čáveske bokhale!"

"Earth-spirit! Earth-spirit
Be thou ill.
Let thy milk be fire
Burn in the earth!
Flow, flow, my milk!
Flow, flow, white milk!
Flow, flow, as I desire
To my hungry child!"

The same is applied when the milk holds back or will not flow, as it is then supposed that a Pçuvus-wife has secretly suckled her own child at the mother's breast. It is an old belief that elves put their own offspring in the place of infants, whom they sometimes steal.

FOR CONVULSIVE WEEPING

When the child is subject to convulsive weeping or spasms, and loses its sleep, the mother takes a straw from the child's sleeping-place and puts into her mouth. Then, while she is fumigated with dried cow-dung, into, which the hair of the father and mother have been mingled, she chants:--

"Bala, bálá pçubuvén,
Čík te bálá pçubuvén,
Čík te bálá pçubuvén,
Pçábuvel náshvályipen!"

"Hair, hair, burn!
Dirt and hair burn
Dirt and hair burn
Illness be burned!"

In Southern Hungary convulsive weeping in children is cured as follows: In the evening, when the fire burns before the tent, the mother takes her child in her arms and carries it three times around the fire, putting on it a pipkin full of water, into which she puts three coals. With this water she washes the head of her child, and pours some of it on a black dog. Then she goes to the next stream or brook, and lets fall into it a red twist, saying:--

"Lává Niváshi ádá bolditori te láhá m're čaveskro rovipen! Káná sástavestes ánáv me tute pçábáyá te yándrá."

"Nivashi take this twist, and with it the weeping of my child. When it is well I will bring thee apples and eggs."

FOR A BUMP ON THE HEAD

When a child "bumps" its head the swelling is pressed with the blade of a knife, and the following spell is muttered thrice, seven, or nine times, according to the gravity of the injury:--

"Ač tu, ač in, ač kovles,
The may sik tu mudarés!
Andre pcuv tu jiá,
Dikav tut me ñikáná!
Shuri, shuri áná,
De pal pçuv!"

"Be thou, be thou, be thou weak (*i.e.*, soft)
And very soon perish!"

Go thou into the earth,
May I see thee never more
Bring knives, knives,
Give (*i.e.*, put) into the earth."

Then the knife is stuck three, seven, or nine times into the earth. If the child or a grown person has a bleeding at the nose, some of the blood is covered with earth, and the following verse repeated

"Pçuvush, dáv tute
Pcuvush, lává mánge,
De tre cáveske
Hin may táte!
Sik lava!"

"Pcuvus, I give to thee,
Pcuvus, oh take from me,
Give it to thy child,
It is very warm,
Take it quickly!"

FOR PAINS IN THE STOMACH

If the child has pains in the stomach, the hair of a black dog is burned to powder and kneaded with the mother's milk and some of the feces of the child into a paste. This prescription occurs in the magical medical formulas Of MARCEI.LUS BURDIGALENIS, the court-physician at Rome in the fourth century: "Cape mel atticum et stercus infantis quod primum demittit, statim ex lacte mulieris quæ puerum allactat permiscebis et sic inunges," &c. Most of the prescriptions of Marcellus were of ancient Etrurian origin, and I have found many of them still in use in the Romagna Toscana. This is put into a cloth and bound on the belly of the child. When it falls asleep a hole is bored in a tree and the paste put into it. The hole is then stopped up with a wooden plug, and while this is being done the following is repeated:--

"Andrál por prejiá,
André selene beshá!
Beshá beshá tu káthe!
Penáv, penáv me tu te!"

"Depart from the belly
Live in the green! (tree)

Remain, remain thou here
I say, I say to thee!"

OTHER MAGICS AND MYSTERIES

EGG MAGIC

Egg-lore is inexhaustible. The eggs of Maundy Thursday (*Witten Donnertag*), says a writer in *The Queen*, protect a house against thunder and lightning, but, in fact, an egg hung up is a general protection, hence the ostrich eggs and cocoanuts of the East. Some other very interesting items in the communication referred to are as follows:--

WITCHES AND EGGS

'To hang an egg laid on Ascension Day in the roof of a house,' says Reginald Scot in 1584, 'preserveth the same from all hurts.' Probably this was written with an eye to the 'hurts' arising from witchcraft, in connection with which eggs were supposed to possess certain mysterious powers. In North Germany, if you have a desire to see the ladies of the broomstick on May Day, their festival, you must take an egg laid on Maundy Thursday, and stand where four roads meet; or else you must go into church on Good Friday, but come out before the blessing. It was formerly quite an article of domestic belief that the shells must be broken after eating eggs, lest the witches should sail out to sea in them; or, as Sir Thomas Browne declared, lest they 'should draw or prick their names therein, and veneficiously mischief' the person who had partaken of the egg. North Germans, ignoring this side of the question, say, "Break the shells or you will get the ague;" and Netherlanders advise you to secure yourself against the attacks of this disagreeable visitor by eating on Easter Day a couple of eggs which were laid on Good Friday.

SCOTTISH SUPERSTITIONS

Scotch fishers, who may be reckoned among the most superstitious of folks, believe that contrary winds and much consequent vexation of spirit will be the result of having eggs on board with them; while in the west of England it is considered very unlucky to bring birds' eggs into the house, although they may be hung up with impunity outside. Mr. Gregor, in his

'Folklore of the North-East of Scotland,' gives us some curious particulars concerning chickens, and the best methods of securing a satisfactory brood. The hen, it seems, should be set on an odd number of eggs, or the chances are that most, if not all, will be addled--a mournful prospect for the henwife; also they must be placed under the mother bird after sunset, or the chickens will be blind. If the woman who performs this office carries the eggs wrapped up in her chemise, the result will be hen birds; if she wears a man's hat, cocks. Furthermore, it is as well for her to repeat a sort of charm, 'A' in thegeethir, A oot thegeethir.'

UNLUCKY EGGS

There are many farmers' wives, even in the present day, who would never dream of allowing eggs to be brought into the house or taken out after dark--this being deemed extremely unlucky. Cuthbert Bede mentions the case of a farmer's wife in Rutland who received a setting of ducks' eggs from a neighbour at nine o'clock at night. 'I cannot imagine how she could have been so foolish,' said the good woman, much distressed, and her visitor, upon inquiry, was told that ducks' eggs brought into a house after sunset would never be hatched. A Lincolnshire superstition declares that if eggs are carried over running water they will be useless for setting purposes; while in Aberdeen there is an idea prevalent among the country folks that should it thunder a short time before chickens are hatched, they will die in the shell. The same wiseacres may be credited with the notion that the year the farmer's gudewife presents him with an addition to his family is a bad season for the poultry yard. 'Bairns an' chuckens,' say they, 'dinna thrive in ae year.' The probable explanation being that the gudewife, taken up with the care of her bairn, has less time to attend to the rearing of the 'chuckens.'

FORTUNE-TELLING IN NORTHUMBERLAND

Besides the divination practised with the white of an egg, which certainly appears of a vague and unsatisfactory character, another species of fortune-telling with eggs is in vogue in Northumberland on the eve of St. Agnes. A maiden desirous of knowing what her future lord is like, is enjoined to boil an egg, after having spent the whole day fasting and in silence, then to extract the yolk, fill the cavity with salt, and eat the whole, including the shell. This highly unpalatable supper finished, the heroic maid must walk backwards, uttering this invocation to the saint:--

*"Sweet St. Agnes, work thy fast,
If ever I be to marry man,*

*Or man be to marry me,
I hope him this night to sec.'"*

FRIEDRICH and others assert that the saying in Luke xi. 12--"Or if he shall ask an egg shall he give him a scorpion?"--is a direct reference to ancient belief that the egg typified the good principle, and the scorpion evil, and which is certainly supported by a cloud of witnesses in the form of classic folk-lore. The egg, as a cosmogenic symbol, and indicating the origin of all things, finds a place in the mythologies of many races. These are indicated with much erudition by FRIEDRICH, "Symbolik der Natur," p. 686.

In Lower Alsatia it is believed that if a man will take an Easter egg into the church and look about him, if there be any witches in the congregation he may know them by their having in their hands pieces of pork instead of prayer-books, and milk-pails on their heads for bonnets;(WOLF, "Deutsche Mährchen und Sagen," p. 270). There is also an ancient belief that an egg built into a new building will protect it against evil and witchcraft. Such eggs were found in old houses in Altenhagen and Iserlohen, while in the East there is a proverb, "the egg of the chamber" ("Hamasa" of ABU TEMMAN, v. RÜCKERT, Stuttgart, 1846), which seems to point to the same practice.

The Romans expressed a disaster by saying "Ovum ruptum est" ("The egg is smashed"). Among other egg-proverbs I find the following:--

His eggs are all omelettes (*French*); *i.e.*, broken up.

Eggs in the pan give pancakes but nevermore chicks (*Low German*).

Never a chicken comes from broken eggs (*Low German*).

Bad eggs, bad chickens. Hence in America "a bad egg" for a man who is radically bad, and "a good egg" for the contrary.

Eggs not yet laid are uncertain chickens; *i.e.*, "Do not count your chickens before they are hatched."

Tread carefully among eggs (*German*).

The egg pretends to be cleverer than the hen.

He waits for the eggs and lets the hen go.

He who wants eggs must endure the clucking of the hen (*Westphalian*).

He thinks his eggs are of more account than other people's hens.

One rotten egg spoils all the pudding.

Rotten eggs and bad butter always stand by one another; or "go well together."

Old eggs, old lovers, and an old horse are either rotten or for the worse.

"All eggs are of the same size" (Eggs are all alike), he said, and grabbed the biggest.

As like as eggs (*Old Roman*).

As sure as eggs.

His eggs all have two yolks.

If you have many eggs you can have many cakes.
He who has many eggs scatters many shells.
To throw an egg at a sparrow.
To borrow trouble for eggs not yet hatched.
Half an egg is worth more than all the shell.
A drink after an egg, and a leap after an apple.
A rotten egg in his face.

In the early mythology, the egg, as a bird was hatched from it, and as it resembled seeds, nuts, &c., from which new plants come, was regarded as the great type of production. This survives in love-charms, as when a girl in the Tyrol believes she can secure a man's love by giving him a red Easter egg. This giving red eggs at Easter is possibly derived from the ancient Parsees, who did the same at their spring festival. Among the Christians the reproductive and sexual symbolism, when retained, was applied to the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul. Hence Easter eggs. And as Christ by His crucifixion caused this, or originated the faith, we have the *ova de crucibus*, the origin of which has puzzled so many antiquaries; for the cross itself was, like the egg, a symbol of life, in earlier times of reproduction, and in a later age of life eternal. These eggs are made of a large size of white glass by the Armenian Christians.

CHARMS OR CONJURATIONS TO CURE OR PROTECT ANIMALS

To keep domestic animals from straying or being stolen, or falling ill, they are, when a gypsy first becomes their owner, driven up before a fire by his tent. Then they are struck with a switch, which is half blacked with coal, across the back, while the following is repeated:--

"Ač tu, ač kathe!
Tu hin mange!
Te Nivasa the jiánen
Ná dikh tu ádálen!
Trin lánca bin mánge,
Me pčándáv tute:
Yeká o devlá, ávri
O Kristus, trite Maria!"

"Stay thou, stay here
Thou art mine!
And the Nivasi when they go
Thou shalt not see them!"

Three chains I have,
I bind thee:
One is God, the other (beyond)
The Christ, the third, Maria!"

HORSES

To charm a horse, they draw, with a coal, a ring on the left hoof and on the right a cross, and murmur

Obles, obles te obles!
Ac tu, ac tù máy sástes
Ná th' ávehás beng tute
Devlá, devlá ač tute!
Gule devlá bishálá
E gráyeskro perá
Miseçescro dád!
Niko mánushenge áč
Káske me dáv, leske áč
Shukáres tu áč,
Voyesá te láčes áč,
Ashunen eftá Pçuvuse:
Eftá lánká hin mánge,
Ferinen ádálá
Táysá, táysá e pedá!"

"Round, round, and round
Be thou, be thou very sound
The devil shall not come to thee.
God, God shall be with thee
Sweet God drive away
From the horse's body
The Father of Evil!
Be to (go not to) any other man
To whom I give (sell) unto him
Be beautiful!
Frolicsome and good,
Seven spirits of earth hear
I have seven chains,
Protect this animal
Ever, ever!"

Then a piece of salted bread is given to the horse, and the owner spits seven times into his eyes, by which he is supposed to lose all fear for supernatural beings. According to the gypsies, horses, especially black ones, can see beings which are invisible to human eyes. I have known an old English gypsy who believed that dogs could see ghosts when men could not. The mysterious manner in which dogs and horses betray fear when there is apparently nothing to dread, the howling of the former by night, and the wild rushes of the latter, doubtless led to this opinion. The bread and salt will recall to the reader the fact that the same was given at the ancient mysteries apparently for the purpose of strengthening the neophyte so that he should not fear the supernatural beings whom he was supposed to meet. It is curious to find this peculiar form of the sacrament administered to a horse. Another protective charm is common among the Southern Hungarian gypsies. The dung of a she-goat dried and powdered is sifted on a horse's back and this spell recited:--

"Miseçes prejiá,
Andrál t're perá!
Trádá čik busčákri
Miseçes perákri,
Andral punrá, andral dumno,
Andral yákhá, andral kánná!
Nevkerádyi av ákána,
Ač tu, ač to čá mánge:
Ač tu, áč tu, áč kathe!"

"Evil be gone
From thy belly!
Drive away she-goat's dung
Evil from the belly,
From the feet, from the back,
From the eyes, from the ears
New-born be now,
Be thou, be thou only mine
Stay thou, stay thou, stay here!"

In the Hungarian gypsy-tribe of the Kukuya, the following method of protecting horses is used: The animal is placed by the tent-fire and there a little hole is dug before him into which ninefold grass and some hairs from his mane and tail are put. Then his left fore-hoof is traced on the ground, and the earth within it is carefully taken out and shaken into the hole, while these lines are repeated:--

"Yeká čunul yeká bál,
Tute e bokh náñi sál,
Ko tut čorel, the merel
Sar e bálá, čunulá,
Pal e pčuv the yov ável!
Pčuvus, adalen tute,
Sástes gráy ác mánge!"

"A straw, a hair!
May you never be hungry
May he who steals you die
Like the hair and the straw,
May he go to the ground
Earth, these things to thee
May a sound horse be mine!"

If the animal be a mare and it is desired that she shall be with foal, they give her oats to eat out of an apron or a gourd, and say

"Trin kánályá, trin jiuklá,
Jiánen upre pláyá!
Cábá, pčarcs hin perá!
Trin kánályá, trin jiuklá
Jiánen tele pláyá,
É čevá ándrasaváren
Yek čumut ándre časáren,
Tre perá sik pčáreven!"

"Three asses, three dogs,
Go up the hill!
Eat, fill thy belly with young!
Three asses, three dogs,
Go down the hill,
They close the holes,
They put the moon in (them)
Thy belly be soon fruitful!"

CATTLE AND SWINE

There is another formula for protecting and aiding cattle, which is practised among other races besides that of the gypsies; as, for instance, among the Slovacks of Northern Hungary. This I shall leave in the original--

"Dieser Verwahrungsmittel besteht darin, dass dem gekauften weiblichen Thiere der Mann den blanken Hintern zeigt, einem mannlichen Thiere aber eine weibliche Person. Hiebei werden die Worte gesagt –

"Sár o kár pál e punrá,
Kiyá mänge ác táysá!
Wie der Schwantz am Bein,
Sollst du stets bei mir sein!"

Or else:--

"Sár e minč pal e per,
Kiyá mänge ác buter!
Wie das Loch im Leib,
Also bei mir bleib!"

To secure swine to their owner a hole is dug in the turf which is filled with salt and charcoal dust, which is covered with earth, and these words uttered:--

"Adá hin tute
Ná ává pál menge
Dáv tute, so kámáv
Pçuvusheyá, áshuná, p. 86
Čores tuna muká
Hin menge trin láncá,
Trin máy láce Urmá,
Ke ferinen men!"

"This is thine,
Come not to us
I give thee what I can
Oh Spirit of earth, hear
Let not the thief go!
We have three chains,
Three very good fairies
Who protect us."

If the swine find the hole and root it up--as they will be tolerably certain to do owing to their fondness for salt and charcoal--they will not be stolen or run away.

The *Urmen*, or Fairies, are supposed to be very favourable to cattle, therefore children who torment cows are told "*Urme tute ná bica somnakune pçábáy*"--"The fairies will not send you any golden apples!" If the English gypsies had the word *Urme* (and it may be that it exists among them even yet), this would be, "*I Urme ná bitcher tute sonnakai pábya!*"

But the mighty charm of charms to protect cattle from theft is the following: Three drops of blood are made to fall from the finger of a little child on a piece of bread which is given to the animal to eat, with these words:

"Dav tute trinen rătă
Ternes te láces ávná!
Ko tut čorel, ádáleske
Hin rătă te más shutyárdye!

Káná rătă te rătă
Paltire per ávná,
Yákh te yákh te báre yákh
Sikoves çál te çál
Ko kámel tut te çál!"

"I give three (drops of) blood
To become young and good;
Who steals thee to him
Shall be (is) blood and flesh dried up!

When blood and blood
Pass into thy belly,
Fire and fire and great fire
Shall devour and devour all
Who will eat thee!"

When the wandering, or tent-gypsies, find that cattle are ill and do not know the nature of the disease, they take two birds--if possible quails, called by them *bereçto* or *fürýo*--one of which is killed, but the other, besprinkled with its blood, is allowed to fly away. With what remains of the blood they sprinkle some fodder, which is put before the animal, with the words:--

"So ándre tu miseç hin
Avri ává!
Káthe ker ná ávlá,
Miseçeske!
Káná rătă ná ávná,
Násvályipen ná ávná!
Miseç, tu ávri ává,
Ada ker ná láce;
Dáv rătă me káthe!"

"What in thee is evil
Come forth
Here is no home
For the evil one!
When (drops of) blood come not,
Sickness comes not,
Thou evil one, come forth!"

"Trin párne, trin kále,
Trin tçule páshlajen káthe,
Ko len hádjinel
Ač kiva mánge!"

"Three white, three black,
Three fat lie together here.
Whoever disturbs them
Remain to me! (Be mine!)"

To insure pigs thriving by a new owner, some charcoal-dust is mingled with their food and these words spoken:--

"Nivaseske ná muká,
The çál t're çábená!
Miseç yákhá tut díkhen,
The yon káthe mudáren,
Tu atunci çábá len!"

"Do not let the Nivasi
Eat thy food,
Evil eyes see thee,
And they here shall perish,
Then do thou eat them!"

As a particularly powerful conjuration against thieves, the owner runs thrice, while quite naked, round the animal or object which he wishes to protect, and repeats at every turn:--

"Oh coreyá ná prejiá.
Dureder ná ává!
T're vástá, t're punrá
Avcná kirñodyá
Te ádá pedá láves!"

"Oh, thief, do not go,
Further do not come
Thy hands, thy feet
Shall decay
If thou takest this animal!"

Another "thieves' benediction" is as follows: The owner goes at midnight with the animal or object to be protected to a cross-roads, and while letting fall on the ground a few hairs of the beast, or a bit of the thing whatever it be, repeats:--

"Ada hin tute,
Ná ává pál menge,
Dav tute, so kámáv;
Pçuvuseyá áshuná!

"This home is not good,
Here I give (thee) blood!"

If a cow gives bloody milk it is thought to be caused by her eating *Wachtelkraut*, or quail weed, which is a poison. In such a case they sprinkle the milk on a field frequented by quails and repeat:--

"Dav ráta tumenge
Adá ná hin láçe!
Ráyeskro Kristeskro ráta
Adá hin máy láçe
Adá hin ámenge!"

"I give to you blood,
Which is not good!
The Lord Christ's blood
Is truly good,
That is ours!"

If a cow makes water while being milked, she is bewitched, and it is well in such a case to catch some of the urine, mix it with onion-peelings and the egg of a black hen. This is boiled and mixed with the cow's food while these lines are repeated:--

"Ko ándré hin, avriává,
Trin Urma cingáarden les,
Trin Urma tráden les
Andre yándengré ker
Beshél yov ándre ker

Hin leske máy yakhá,
Hin leske máy páña!"

"Who is within, let him come out!
Three Urme call him,
Three Urme drive him
Into the egg-shell house,
There he lives in the house
He has much fire,
He has much water!"

Then half the shell of the egg of the black hen is thrown into a running stream and the other half into a fire.

A SPELL AGAINST WORMS

The following is the remedy for the so-called *Würmer*, or worms, *i.e.*, external sores. Before sunrise wolf's milk (*Wolfsmilch*, *rukeskro tçud*) is collected, mixed with salt, garlic, and water, put into a pot, and boiled down to a brew. With a part of this the afflicted spot is rubbed, the rest is thrown into a brook, with the words:--

"Kirmora jánen ándre tçud
Andrál tçud, andré sir
Andrál sir, andré páñi,
Panensá kiyá dádeske,
Kiyá Niváseske
Pçandel tumen shelchá
Eñávárdesh teñá!"

"Worms go in the milk,
From the milk into the garlic,
From the garlic into the water,
With the water to (your) father,
To the Nivasi,
He shall bind you with a rope,
Ninety-nine (yards long)."

A common cure of worms in swine among the Transylvanian tent-gypsies is to stand ere the sun rises before a *çadcerli*, or nettle, and while pouring on it the urine of the animal to be cured, repeat:--

"Láče, láče detehará!
Hin mánge máy bute trásha
Kirmora hin [báleceske],
Te me penáv, penáv tute!
Káles hin yon, loles, párnesh,
Deisislá hin yon mulánes!"

"Good, good morrow!
I have much sorrow.
Worms are in [my swine to-day]
And I say, to you I say,
Black are they or white or red
By to-morrow be they dead!"

FOR LOSS OF APPETITE

If pigs lose their appetites a brew is made of milk, charcoal dust, and their own dung, which is put before them with the words: "*Friss Hexe und verreck!*"

AGAINST A COUGH

To cure a cough in animals one should take from the hoofs of the first riding horse, dirt or dust, and put it into the mouth of the suffering animal with the words:

"Prejiál te náñi yov ável!"

"May he go away and never return!"

FOR GOOD SPIRITS

To have a horse always in good spirits and lively during the waning moon his spine is rubbed with garlic, while these words are uttered:

"Miseç ándre tut,
O beng the çal but!
Laçesh ándré tut
Açel ándre tut!"

"(What is) evil in thee,
May the devil eat it much!
(What is) good in thee,
May it remain in thee!"

But it is far more effective when the garlic is put on a rag of the clothes of one who has been hanged, and the place rubbed with it.

OF PREGNANCY AND CHARMS, OR FOLK-LORE CONNECTED WITH IT—AND CHARMS FOR PREVENTING THE FLOW OF BLOOD

AGAINST BARENNESS

A barren woman in Eastern Europe is generally suspected of having had intercourse with a vampire or spirit before her marriage, and she who has done this, willingly or unconsciously, never has children. They have recourse to many magic medicines or means to promote conception; one of the most harmless is to eat grass from the grave in which a woman with child has been buried. While doing this the woman repeats:--

"Dui riká hin mire minč,
Dui yârá hin leskro kor,
Avnás dûi yek jelo,
Keren ákána yek jeles."

Or else the woman drinks the water in which the husband has cast hot coals, or, better still, has spit, saying:--

"Káy me yákh som
Ac tu ángár,
Káy me brishind som,
Ac tu pâni!"

"Where I am flame
Be thou the coals
Where I am rain
Be thou the water!"

Or at times the husband takes an egg, makes a small hole at each end, and then blows the yolk and white into the mouth of his wife who swallows them.

If a gypsy woman in Transylvania wishes to know whether she be with child, she must stand for nine evenings at a cross-road with an axe or hammer, which she must wet with her own water, and then bury there. Should it be dug up on the ninth morning after, and found rusty, it is a sign that she is "in blessed circumstances."

To bring on the *menses* a gypsy woman must, while roses are in bloom, wash herself all over with rose-water, and then pour the water over a rose-bush. Or she takes an egg, pours its contents into a jug, and makes water on it. If the egg swims the next morning on the surface she is *enceinte*; if the yolk is separate from the white she will bear a son, if they are mingled a daughter.

Should a woman eat fish while pregnant the child will be slow in learning to speak, but if she feed on snails it will be slow in learning to walk. The proverbs, "Dumb as a fish," and "Slow as a snail," appear here.

A Russian gypsy spell against barrenness:--

"Laki, thou destroyest and dost make everything on earth; thou canst see nothing old, for death lives in thee, thou givest birth to all upon the earth for thou thyself art life. By thy might cause me ----- to bear good fruit, I who am deprived of the joy of motherhood, and barren as a rock."

Another incantation of the same nature is as follows:--

"Thou art the mother of every living creature and the distributor of good thou doest according to thy wisdom in destroying what is useless or what has lived its destined time; by thy wisdom thou makest the earth to regenerate all that is new. . . . Thou dost not seek the death of any one, for thou art the benefactress of mankind."

TO STOP THE FLOW OF BLOOD

JACOB GRIMM had long been familiar with a German magic spell of the eleventh century--*ad stringendum sanguinem*, or stopping bleeding--but, as he says, "noch nicht zu deuten vermochte," could not explain them. They were as follows:--

"Tumbo saz in berke,
Mit tumbemo kinde in arme,
Tumb hiez der berc
Tumb hiez daz kint,

Der heiligo Tumbo
Versegne disc wunta."

"Tumbo (*i.e.*, dumm or stupid) sat in the hill
With a stupid child in arms,
Dumb (stupid) the hill was called
Dumb was called the child,
The holy Tumbo (or dumb).
Heal (bless) this wound!"

Some years after he found the following among the magic formulas, of
MARCELLUS BURDIGALENSIS:--

"Carmen utile profluvio mulieri:--
"Stupidus in monte ibat,
Stupidus stupuit,
Adjuro te matrix
Ne hoc iracunda suscipias.
"Pari ratione scriptum ligabis.

I.e.: "A song useful for a flow of blood in woman:--

"The stupid man went into the mountain,
The stupid man was amazed;
I adjure thee, oh womb,
Be not angry!

"Which shall also be bound as a writing," *i.e.*, according to a previous direction that it shall be written on virgin parchment, and bound with a linen cord about the waist of him or of her--*quæ patietur de qualibet parte corporis sanguinis fluxum*--who suffers anywhere from flow of blood.

MISCARRIAGE

There is a superstition among our gypsies that if the shadow of a cross on a grave falls on a woman with child she will have a miscarriage, and this seems to be peculiarly appropriate to girls who have "anticipated the privileges of matrimony." The following rhyme seems to describe the hesitation of a girl who has gone to a cross to produce the result alluded to, but who is withheld by love for her unborn infant:--

"Cigno trušul pal handako
Hin ada ušalinako;

The žiav me pro ušalin,
Ajt' mange lašavo na kin.

Sar e praytin kad' chasarel,
Save šilc barvâl marel,
Pal basavo te prasape,
Mre čajori mojd kâmâle."

"Cross upon a grave so small
Here I see thy shadow fall,
If it fall on me they say
All my shame will pass away.

As the autumn leaf is blown,
By the wind to die alone,
Yet in shame and misery,
My baby will be clear to me!"

There is a belief allied to this of the power of the dead in graves to work wonders, to the effect that if any one plucks a rose from a grave, he or she will soon die. In the following song a gypsy picks a rose from the grave of the one he loved, hoping that it will cause his death:--

"Cignoro hrobosa
Hin sukares rosa
Mange la pchagavas,
Doi me na kânavas.

Beš'las piranake,
Hrobas hin joy mange,
Pchgavas, choč žanav
Pal lele avava
Te me ne brinzinav.
The me počivinav."

"On her little tomb there grows
By itself a lovely rose,
All alone the rose I break,
And I do it for her sake.

I sat by her I held so dear,
Now her grave and mine are near,
I break the rose because I know
That to her I soon must go,

Grief cannot my spirit stir,
Since I know I go to her!"

THE RECOVERY OF STOLEN PROPERTY— LOVE-CHARMS AND LOVE-POTIONS

Among the Hungarian gypsies to recover a stolen animal, some of its dung is taken and thrown to the East and the West with the words

"Kay tut o kam dikhel:
Odoy ává kiyá mánge!"

"Where the sun sees thee,
Hence return to me!"

But when a horse has been stolen, they take what is left of his harness, bury it in the earth and make a fire over it, saying

"Kó tut cordyás
Nasvales th' ávlás
Leske sor ná ávlás,
Tu ná a□ kiyá leske
Avá sástes kiyá mange!
Leskro sor káthe pashlyol
Sár e tçuv avriurál!"
"Who stole thee
Sick may he be
May his strength depart
Do not thou remain by him,
Come (back) sound to me,
His strength lies here
As the smoke goes away!"

To know in which direction the stolen thing lies, they carry a sucking babe to a stream, hold it over the water and say:--

"Pen mánge, oh Nivaseya
Čaveskro vástehá
Kay hin m'ro gráy,
Ujes hin čavo,
Ujes sár o kam
Ujes sár páñi

Ujes sár čumut
Ujes sar legujes?
Pen mánge, oh Niváseyá.
Cáveskro vastchá
Kay hin m'ro gráy!"

"Tell me, oh Nivaseha,
By the child's hand!
Where is my horse ?
Pure is the child
Pure as the sun,
Pure as water,
Pure as the moon,
Pure as the purest.
Tell me, oh Nivaseha,
By the child's hand!
Where is my horse?"

If a man who is seeking for stolen goods finds willow twigs grown into a knot, he ties it up and says:--

"Me avri pčándáv čoreskro báçht!"

"I tie up the thief's luck!"

There is also a belief among the gypsies that these knots are twined by the fairies, and that whoever undoes them undoes his own luck, or that of the person on whom he is thinking.

LOVE CHARMS

These willow-knots are much used in love-charms. To win the love of a maid, a man cuts one of them, puts it into his mouth, and says:--

"T're báçt me çáv,
T're baçt me piyáv,
Dáv tute m're baçt,
Káná tu mánge sál."

I eat thy luck,
I drink thy luck
Give me that luck of thine,
Then thou shalt be mine."

Then the lover, if he can, secretly hides this knot in the bed of the wished-for bride. It is worth noting that these lines are so much like English Gypsy as it was once spoken that there are still men who would, in England, understand every word of it. Somewhat allied to this is another charm. The lover takes a blade of grass in his mouth, and turning to the East and the West, says:-

"Kay o kám, avriável,
Kiya mánge lele beshel!
Kay o kám tel' ável,
Kiya lelákri me beshav."

"Where the sun goes up
Shall my love be by me
Where the sun goes down
There by her I'll be."

Then the blade of grass is cut up into pieces and mingled with some food which the girl must eat, and if she swallow the least bit of the grass, she will be *gewogen und treugesinnt*--moved to love, and true-hearted.

If a gypsy girl be in love she finds the foot-print of her "object," digs out the earth which is within its outline and buries this under a willow-tree, saying:--

"Upro pçuv hin but Pçuvá;
Kás kámáv, mange th' ávlá!
Bárvol, bárvol, sálciye,
Brigá ná hin mánge!
Yov tover, me pori,
Yov kokosh, me cátrá,
Ádá, ádá me kamav!"

"Many earths on earth there be,
Whom I love my own shall be,
Grow, grow willow tree!
Sorrow none unto me!
He the axe, I the helve,
He the cock, I the hen,
This, this (be as) I will!"

Another love-charm which belongs to ancient black witchcraft, and is known far and wide, is the following: When dogs are coupling (*Wenn Hund und Hündin bei der Paarung zusammenhangen*) the lover suddenly covers them

with a cloth, if possible, one which is afterwards presented to the girl whom he seeks, while he says

"Me jiuklo, yoy jiukli,
Yoy tover, me porí,
Me kokosh, yoy cátrá,
Ádá, ádá, me kamáv!"

"I the dog, she the bitch,
I the helve, she the axe,
I the cock (and) she the hen,
That, that I desire!"

He or she who finds a red ribbon, tape, or even a piece of red stuff of any kind, especially if it be wool, will have luck in love. It must be picked up and carried as an amulet, and when raising it from the ground the finder must make a wish for the love of some person, or if he have no particular desire for any one, he may wish for luck in love, or a sweetheart. This is, I believe, pretty generally known in some form all over the world. A yellow ribbon or flower, especially if it be floating on water, presages gold; a white object, silver, or peace or reconciliation with enemies.

It is also lucky for love to find a key. In Tuscany there is a special formula which must be spoken while picking it up. Very old keys are valuable amulets. Those who carry them will learn secrets, penetrate mysteries, and succeed in what they undertake.

If you can get a shoe which a girl has worn you may make sad havoc with her heart if you carry it near your own. Also hang it up over your bed and put into it the leaves of rue.

The gypsy girls of Transylvania believe that spells to 'know your future husband' can be best carried out on the eves of certain days, such as New Year, Easter, and Saint George. 'On New Year's Eve they throw shoes or boots on a willow tree, but are only allowed to throw them nine times.' Compare this with the throwing of the old shoe after the bride in many countries. 'If the shoe catches in the branches the girl who threw it will be married within a year.'

"Per de, per de prájtina,
Varckaj hin, hász kâmv?
Basá, párró dzsiuklo,
Pirano dzsál mai szigo.'

"Scattered leaves around I see,
Where can my true lover be?

Ah, the white dog barks at last
And my love comes running fast!

"If during the singing the bark of a dog should be heard, the damsel will be 'wedded and bedded and a' 'ere New Year comes again. This is virtually the same with a charm practised in Tuscany, which from other ancient witness I believe to be of Etruscan origin. Allied to this is the following: On the night of Saint George's Day (query, Saint George's Eve?) gypsy girls blindfold a white dog, then, letting it loose, place themselves quietly in several places. She to whom the dog runs first will be the first married. Blindman's buff was anciently an amorous, semi-magical, or witches' game, only that in place of the dog a man was blindfolded.

"Or the girl pulls a hair from her head, fastens a ring to it, and dangles it in a jug. The ring vibrates or swings, and so often as it touches the side of the jug so many years will it be before she marries.' This is an ancient spell of Eastern origin. As performed according to old works the thread must be wound around the ring-finger and touch the pulse. On the edge of a bowl the letters of the alphabet, or numerals, are marked, and the ring swinging against these spells words or denotes numbers. The touching of the latter indicates the number of lovers a girl is to have.

"Early on Whitsunday morning the girls go out, and if they see clouds in the East they throw twigs in that direction, saying:--

"Predzsia, csirik leja,
Te ná tráda m're píranes.'

'Fly my bird-fly, I say,
Do not chase my love away.'

For they think that if on Whitsun-morn there are many clouds in the East few girls will be married during the coming year. This peculiar, seemingly incomprehensible, custom of the gypsies originated in an old belief, the germ of which we find in the Hindoo myth, according to which the spring morning which spreads brightness and blessings descends from the blue bird of heaven, who, on the other hand, also represents night or winter. Special preparations are made so that the predictions shall be fulfilled. On the days mentioned the girls are neither allowed to wash themselves, nor to kiss any one, nor go to church. At Easter, or on the Eve of Saint George, the girl must eat fish, in order to see the future in her dreams.

"On Easter morning the girls boil water, in the bubbles of which they try to make out the names of their future husbands.

"To find out whether the future husband is young or old the girl must take nine seeds of the thorn-apple, ploughed-up earth of nine different places, and water from as many more. With these she kneads a cake, which

is laid on a cross-road on Easter or Saint George's morning. If a woman steps first on the cake her husband will be a widower or an old man, but if a man the husband will be single or young.

"To see the form of a future husband a girl must go on the night of Saint George to a cross-road. Her hair is combed backwards, and, pricking the little finger of the left hand, she must let three drops of blood fall on the ground while saying:--

"Mro rat dav piraneszke,
Kász dikhav, avava adaleske."

"I give my blood to my loved one,
Whom I shall see shall be mine own!"

"Then the form of her future husband will rise slowly out of the blood and fade as slowly away. She must then gather up the dust, or mud-blood, and throw it into a river, otherwise the Nivashi, or Water-spirits, will lick up the blood, and the girl be drowned within the Year. It is said that about twenty years ago the beautiful Roszi (Rosa), the daughter of Peter Danku, the waywode, or chief of the Kukuja tribe, was drowned during the time of her betrothal because when she performed this ceremony she had neglected to gather up the sprinkled blood.

"If a girl wishes to see the form of her future husband, and also to know what luck awaits her love, she goes on any of the fore-named nights to a cross-road, and sits down on the ground, putting before her a fried fish and a glass of brandy. Then the form of her future husband will appear and stand before her for a time, silent and immovable. Should he then take the fish the marriage will be happy, but if he begin with the brandy it will be truly wretched. But if he takes neither, one of the two will die during the year.

"That the laying of cards, the interpretation of dreams, the reading of the future in the hand, and similar divinations are constantly practised is quite natural, but it would lead us too far to enlarge on all these practices. But there are charms to win or cause love which are more interesting. Among these are the love-potions or philtres, for preparing which gypsies have always been famed.

"The simplest and least hurtful beverage which they give unknown to persons to secure love is made as follows:--On any of the nights mentioned they collect in the meadows gander-goose (Románi, *vast bengeszkeró*--devil's hand; in Latin, *Orchis maculata*; German, *Knaberkraut*), the yellow roots of which they dry and crush and mix with their *menses*, and thus they introduce to the food of the person whose love they wish to secure"

Of the same character is a potion which they prepare as follows: On the day of Saint John they catch a green frog and put it in a closed earthen

receptacle full of small holes, and this they place in an ant-hill. The ants eat the frog and leave the skeleton. This is ground to powder, mixed with the blood of a bat and dried bath-flies and shaped into small buns, which are, as the chance occurs, put secretly into the food of the person to be charmed.

There is yet another charm connected with this which I leave in the original Latin in which it is modestly given by Dr. Wlislöcki: "Qualibet supradictarum noctium occiduntur duo canes nigri, mas et femina, quorum genitalia extirpata ad condensationem coeuntur. Hujus materiae particula consumpta quemvis invincibili amore facit exardescere in eam eamve, qui hoc medio prodigioso usus est."

It may be remarked that these abominable charms are also not only known to the Tuscan witches of the present day, but are found in Voodoo sorcery, and are indeed all over the world. To use revolting means in black sorcery may be, or perhaps certainly is, spontaneous--sporadic, but when we find the peculiar details of the processes identical, we are so much nearer to transmission or history that the burden of disproving must fall on the doubter.

"To the less revolting philtres belongs one in which the girl puts the ashes of a burnt piece of her dress which had been wet with perspiration and has, perhaps, hair adhering to it, into a man's food or drink (also Tuscan).

"To bury the foot of a badger (also Voodoo), or the eye of a crow, under one's sleeping-place is believed to excite or awaken love.

"According to gypsy belief one can spread love by transplanting blood, perspiration, or hair into the body of a person.

"By burning the hair, blood, or saliva of any one, his or her love can be extinguished.

"The following is a charm used to punish a faithless lover. The deceived maid lights a candle at midnight and pricks it several times with a needle, saying:--

"Pchâgerâv momely
Pchâgera tre vodyi!"

"Thrice the candle's broke by me
Thrice thy heart shall broken be!"

"If the faithless lover marries another, the girl mixes the broken shell of a crab in his food or drink, or hides one of her hairs in a bird's nest. This will make the marriage unhappy, and the husband will continually pine for his neglected sweetheart."

This last charm is allied to another current among the Slavonians, and elsewhere mentioned, by which it is believed that if a bird gets any of a

man's hair and works it into a nest he will suffer terribly till it is completely decayed.

One way of interrogating fate in love affairs is to slice an apple in two with a sharp knife; if this can be done without cutting a seed the wish of the heart will be fulfilled. Of yore, in many lands the apple was ever sacred to love, wisdom, and divination. Once in Germany a well-formed child became, through bewitchment, sorely crooked and cramped; by the advice of a monk the mother cut an apple in three pieces and made the child eat them, whereupon it became as before. In Illzach, in Alsace, there is a custom called "Andresle." On Saint Andrew's Eve a girl must take from a widow, and without returning thanks for it, an apple. As in Hungary she cuts it in two and must eat one half of it before midnight, and the other half after it; then in sleep she will see her future husband. And there is yet another love-spell of the split apple given by SCHEIBLE ("Die gute alte Zeit," Stuttgart, 1847, p, 297) which runs as follows:--

"On Friday early as may be,
Take the fairest apple from a tree,
Then in thy blood on paper white
Thy own name and thy true love's write,
That apple thou in two shalt cut,
And for its cure that paper put,
With two sharp pins of myrtle wood
Join the halves till it seem good,
In the oven let it dry,
And wrapped in leaves of myrtle lie,
Under the pillow of thy dear,
Yet let it be unknown to her
And if it a secret be
She soon will show her love for thee."



Part Four

**A COLLECTION OF MYSTERIOUS AND
INVALUABLE ARTS AND REMEDIES,
FOR MAN AS WELL AS ANIMALS, WITH
MANY PROOFS**

From

JOHN GEORGE HOHMAN'S

**POW-WOWS;
OR,
LONG LOST FRIEND**

Original Publication, 1820.



ARTS AND REMEDIES.

A GOOD REMEDY FOR HYSTERICIS (OR MOTHER FITS), TO BE USED THREE TIMES.

— Put that joint of the thumb which sits in the palm of the hand on the bare skin covering the small bone which stands out above the pit of the heart, and speak the following at the same time:

*Matrix, patrix, lay thyself right and safe,
Or thou or I shall on the third day fill the grave. + + +*

ANOTHER REMEDY FOR HYSTERICIS AND FOR COLDS.

— This must be attended to every evening, that is, whenever you pull off your shoes and stockings, run your finger in between all the toes and smell it. This will certainly effect a cure.

A CERTAIN REMEDY TO STOP BLEEDING, WHICH CURES, NO MATTER HOW FAR A PERSON BE AWAY, IF ONLY HIS FIRST NAME IS RIGHTLY PRONOUNCED WHILE USING IT:

*Jesus Christ, dearest blood!
That stoppeth the pain and stoppeth the blood.
In this help you [first name] God the Father, God the Son,
God the Holy Ghost. Amen.*

A REMEDY TO BE USED WHEN ANYONE IS FALLING AWAY, AND WHICH HAS CURED MANY PERSONS.

— Let the person in perfect soberness and without having conversed with anyone, catch rain in a pot, before sunrise; boil an egg in this; bore three small holes in this egg with a needle, and carry it to an ant-hill made by big ants; and the person will feel relieved as soon as the egg is devoured.

ANOTHER REMEDY TO BE APPLIED WHEN ANYONE IS SICK, WHICH HAS AFFECTED MANY A CURE WHERE DOCTORS COULD NOT HELP.

— Let the sick person, without having conversed with anyone, put water in a bottle before sunrise, close it up tight, and put it immediately in some box or chest, lock it and stop up the keyhole; the key must be carried in one of the pockets for three days, as nobody dare have it except the person who puts the bottle with water in the chest or box.

A GOOD REMEDY FOR WORMS, TO BE USED FOR MEN AS WELL AS FOR CATTLE:

*Mary, God's Mother, traversed the land,
Holding three worms close in her hand;
One was white, the other was black, the third was red.*

This must be repeated three times, at the same time stroking the person or animal with the hand; and at the end of each application strike the back of the person or the animal, to wit: at the first application once, at the second application twice, and at the third application three times; and then set the worms a certain time, but not less than three minutes.

A GOOD REMEDY AGAINST CALUMNIATION OR SLANDER.

If you are calumniated or slandered to your very skin, to your very flesh, to your very bones, cast it back upon the false tongues. + + + Take off your

shirt, and turn it wrong side out, and then run your two thumbs along your body, close under the ribs, starting at the pit of the heart down to the thighs.

A GOOD REMEDY FOR THE COLIC.

I warm ye, ye colic fiends! There is one sitting in judgment, who speaketh: just or unjust. Therefore beware, ye colic fiends! + + +

A GOOD REMEDY FOR THE FEVER.

Good morning, dear Thursday! Take away from [name] the 77-fold fevers. Oh! thou dear Lord Jesus Christ, take them away from him! + + + This must be used on Thursday for the first time, on Friday for the second time, and on Saturday for the third time; and each time thrice. The prayer of faith has also to be said each time, and not a word dare be spoken to anyone until the sun has risen. Neither dare the sick person speak to anyone till after sunrise; nor eat pork, nor drink milk, nor cross running water, for nine days.

TO ATTACH A DOG TO A PERSON, PROVIDED NOTHING ELSE WAS USED BEFORE TO EFFECT IT.

Try to draw some of your blood, and let the dog eat it along with his food, and he will stay with you. Or scrape the four corners of your table while you are eating, and continue to eat with the same knife after having scraped the corners of the table. Let the dog eat those scrapings, and he will stay with you.

A VERY GOOD REMEDY FOR PALPITATION OF THE HEART, AND FOR PERSONS WHO ARE HIDE-BOUND.

Palpitation and hide-bound, be off [name] ribs, Since Christ, our Lord, spoke truth with his lips.

A PRECAUTION AGAINST INJURIES.

Whoever carries the right eye of a wolf fastened inside of his right sleeve, remains free from all injuries.

TO MAKE A WAND FOR SEARCHING FOR IRON, ORE OR WATER.

On the first night of Christmas, between 11 and 12 o'clock, break off from any tree a young twig of one year's growth, in the three highest names (Father, Son and Holy Ghost), at the same time facing toward sunrise. Whenever you apply this wand in searching for anything, apply it three times. The twig must be forked, and each end of the fork must be held in one hand, so that the third and thickest part of it stands up, but do not hold it too tight. Strike the ground with the thickest end, and that which you desire will appear immediately, if there is any in the ground where you strike. The words to be spoken when the wand is thus applied are as follows:

Archangel Gabriel, I conjure thee in the name of God, the Almighty, to tell me, is there any water here or not? do tell me! + + +

If you are searching for Iron or Ore, you have to say the same, only mention the name of what you are searching for.

HOW TO OBTAIN THINGS WHICH ARE DESIRED.

If you call upon another to ask for a favor, take care to carry a little of the five-finger grass with you, and you shall certainly obtain that you desired.

A SURE WAY OF CATCHING FISH.

Take rose seed and mustard seed, and the foot of a weasel, and hang these in a net, and the fish will certainly collect there.

A SAFE REMEDY FOR VARIOUS ULCERS, BOILS AND OTHER DEFECTS.

Take the root of an iron-weed, and tie it around the neck; it cures running ulcers; it also serves against obstructions in the bladder (stranguary), and cures the piles, if the roots are boiled in water with honey, and drank; it cleans and heals the lungs and effects a good breath. If this root is planted among grape vines or fruit trees, it promotes the growth very much. Children who carry it are educated without any difficulty; they become fond of all useful arts and sciences, and grow up joyfully and cheerfully.

A VERY GOOD REMEDY FOR MORTIFICATION AND INFLAMMATION.

*Sanctus Itorius res, call the rest.
Here the mother of God came to his assistance,
reaching out her snow-white hand,
against the hot and cold brand. + + +*

Make three crosses with the thumb. Everything which is applied in words, must be applied three times, and an interval of several hours must intervene each time, and for the third time it is to be applied the next day, unless where it is otherwise directed.

TO PREVENT WICKED OR MALICIOUS PERSONS FROM DOING YOU AN INJURY – AGAINST WHOM IT IS OF GREAT POWER.

*Dullix, ix, ux. Yea, you can't come over Pontio;
Pontio is above Pilato. + + +*

A VERY GOOD REMEDY TO DESTROY BOTS OR WORMS IN HORSES.

You must mention the name of the horse, and say: "If you have any worms, I will catch you by the forehead. If they be white, brown or red, they shall and must now all be dead." You must shake the head of the horse three times, and pass your hand over his back three times to and fro. + + +

TO CURE THE POLL-EVIL IN HORSES, IN TWO OR THREE APPLICATIONS.

Break off three twigs from a cherry-tree: one towards morning, one towards evening, and one towards midnight. Cut three small pieces off the hind part of your shirt, and wrap each of those twigs in one of these pieces; then clean the poll-evil with the twigs and leave them under the eaves. The ends of the twigs which had been in the wound must be turned toward the north; after which you must do your business on them, that is to say, you must dirty them; then cover it, leaving the rags around the twigs. After all this the wound must be again stirred with the three twigs, in one or two days, and the twigs placed as before.

A GOOD REMEDY FOR BAD WOUNDS AND BURNS.

The word of God, the milk of Jesus' mother, and Christ's blood, is for all wounds and burnings good. + + + It is the safest way in all these cases to make the crosses with the hand or thumb three times over the affected parts; that is to say, over all those things to which the three crosses are attached.

A VERY GOOD REMEDY FOR THE WILD-FIRE.

*Wild-fire and the dragon, flew over a wagon.
The wild-fire abated and the dragon skated.*

TO STOP PAINS OR SMARTING IN A WOUND.

Cut three small twigs from a tree — each to be cut off in one cut — rub one end of each twig in the wound, and wrap them separately in a piece of white paper, and put them in a warm and dry place.

TO DESTROY WARTS.

Roast chicken-feet and rub the warts with them; then bury them under the eaves.

TO BANISH THE WHOOPING COUGH.

Cut three small bunches of hair from the crown of the head of a child that has never seen its father; sew this hair up in an unbleached rag and hang it around the neck of the child having the whooping cough. The thread with which the rag is sewed must also be unbleached.

ANOTHER REMEDY FOR THE WHOPPING COUGH WHICH HAS CURED THE MAJORITY OF THOSE WHO HAVE APPLIED IT.

Thrust the child having the whooping cough three times through a blackberry bush, without speaking or saying anything. The bush, however, must be grown fast at the two ends, and the child must be thrust through three times in the same manner, that is to say, from the same side it was thrust through in the first place.

A GOOD REMEDY TO STOP BLEEDING.

This is the day on which the injury happened. Blood, thou must stop, until the Virgin Mary bring forth another son.

Repeat these words three times.

A GOOD REMEDY FOR THE TOOTHACHE.

Stir the sore tooth with a needle until it draws blood; then take a thread and soak it with this blood. Then take vinegar and flour, mix them well so as to form a paste and spread it on a rag, then wrap this rag around the root of an apple-tree, and tie it very close with the above thread, after which the root must be well covered with ground.

HOW TO WALK AND STEP SECURELY IN ALL PLACES.

Jesus walketh with [name]. He is my head; I am his limb. Therefore walketh Jesus with [name].

A VERY GOOD REMEDY FOR THE COLIC.

Take half a gill of good rye whiskey, and a pipe full of tobacco; put the whiskey in a bottle, then smoke the tobacco and blow the smoke into the bottle, shake it well and drink it. This has cured the author of this book and many others. Or, take a white clay pipe which has turned blackish from smoking, pound it to a fine powder, and take it. This will have the same effect.

TO BANISH CONVULSIVE FEVERS.

Write the following letters on a piece of white paper, sew it on a piece of linen or muslin, and hang it around the neck until the fever leaves you:

A b a x a C a t a b a x
A b a x a C a t a b a x
A b a x a C a t a b a
A b a x a C a t a b
A b a x a C a t a
A b a x a C a t
A b a x a C a
A b a x a C
A b a x a
A b a x
A b a
A b

HOW TO BANISH THE FEVER.

Write the following words upon a paper and wrap it up in knot-grass, (breiten Megrieb,) and then tie it upon the body of the person who has the fever:

Potmat sineat,
Potmat sineat,
Potmat sineat.

A VERY GOOD PLASTER.

I doubt very much whether any physician in the United States can make a plaster equal to this. It heals the white swelling, and has cured the sore leg of a woman who for eighteen years had used the prescriptions of doctors in

vain. Take two quarts of cider, one pound of bees'-wax, one pound of sheep-tallow, and one pound of tobacco; boil the tobacco in the cider till the strength is out, and then strain it, and add the other articles to the liquid: stir it over a gentle fire till all is dissolved.

TO MAKE A GOOD EYE-WATER.

Take four cents' worth of white vitriol, for cents' worth of prepared spicewort (calamus root), four cents' worth of cloves, a gill of good whiskey and a gill of water. Make the calamus fine and mix all together; then use it after it has stood a few hours.

A VERY GOOD REMEDY FOR THE WHITE SWELLING.

Take a quart of unslacked lime, and pour two parts of water on it; stir it well and let it stand over night. The scum that collects on the lime-water must be taken off, and a pint of flax-seed oil poured in, after which it must be stirred until it becomes somewhat consistent: then put it in a pot or pan, and add a little lard and wax; melt it well, and make a plaster, and apply it to the parts affected — the plaster should be renewed every day, or at least every other day, until the swelling is gone.

A REMEDY FOR EPILEPSY, PROVIDED THE SUBJECT HAD NEVER FALLEN INTO FIRE OR WATER.

Write reversedly or backwards upon a piece of paper: "IT IS ALL OVER!" This is to be written but once upon the paper; then put it in a scarlet-red cloth, and then wrap it in a piece of unbleached linen, and hang it around the neck on the first Friday of the new moon. The thread with which it is tied must also be unbleached. + + +

REMEDY FOR BURNS.

"Burn, I blow on thee!" — It must be blown on three times in the same breath, like the fire by the sun. + + +

TO STOP BLEEDING.

Count backwards from fifty inclusive till you come down to three. As soon as you arrive at three, you will be done bleeding.

A REMEDY TO RELIEVE PAIN.

Take a rag which was tied over a wound for the first time, and put it in water together with some copperas; but do not venture to stir the copperas until you are certain of the pain having left you.

A GOOD REMEDY FOR THE TOOTHACHE.

Cut out a piece of greensward (sod) in the morning before sunrise, quite unbescrewedly from any place, breath three times upon it, and put it down upon the same place from which it was taken.

TO REMOVE BRUISES AND PAINS.

*Bruise, thou shalt not heat;
Bruise, thou shalt not sweat;
Bruise, thou shalt not run,
No more than Virgin Mary shall bring forth another son. + + +*

A REMARKABLE PASSAGE FROM THE BOOK OF ALBERTUS MAGNUS.

It says: If you burn a large frog to ashes, and mix the ashes with water, you will obtain an ointment that will, if put on any place covered with hair, destroy the hair and prevent it from growing again.

ANOTHER PASSAGE FROM THE WORK OF ALBERTUS MAGNUS.

If you find the stone which a vulture has in his knees, and which you may find by looking sharp, and put it in the victuals of two persons who hate each other, it causes them to make up and be good friends.

TO CURE FITS OR CONVULSIONS.

You must go upon another person's land, and repeat the following words: "I go before another court — I tie up my 77-fold fits." Then cut three small twigs off any tree on the land; in each twig you must make a knot. This must be done on a Friday morning before sunrise, in the decrease of the moon unbesheathedly. + + + Then over your body where you feel the fits you make the crosses. And thus they may be made in all cases where they are applied.

CURE FOR THE HEADACHE.

Tame thou flesh and bone, like Christ in Paradise; and who will assist thee, this I tell thee [/name/] for your repentance sake. + + + This you must say three times, each time lasting for three minutes, and your headache will soon cease. But if your headache is caused by strong drink, or otherwise will not leave you soon, then you must repeat those words every minute. This, however, is not often necessary in regard to headache.

TO MEND BROKEN GLASS.

Take common cheese and wash it well, unslaked lime and the white of eggs, rub all these well together until it becomes one mass, and then use it. If it is made right, it will certainly hold.

HOW TO MAKE CATTLE RETURN TO THE SAME PLACE.

Pull out three small bunches of hair, one between the horns, one from the middle of the back, and one near the tail, and make your cattle eat it in their feed.

ANOTHER METHOD OF MAKING CATTLE RETURN HOME.

Take a handful of salt, go upon your fields and make your cattle walk three times around the same stump or stone, each time keeping the same direction; that is to say, you must three times arrive at the same end of the

stump or stone at which you started from, and then let your cattle lick the salt from the stump or stone.

TO PREVENT THE HESSIAN FLY FROM INJURING THE WHEAT.

Take pulverized charcoal, make ley of it, and soak the seed wheat in it; take it out of the ley, and on every bushel of wheat sprinkle a quart of urine; stir it well, then spread it out to dry.

TO PREVENT CHERRIES FROM RIPENING BEFORE MARTINMAS

Engraft the twigs upon a mulberry-tree, and your desire is accomplished.

STINGING NETTLES – GOOD FOR BANISHING FEARS AND FANCIES, AND TO CAUSE FISH TO COLLECT.

Whenever you hold this weed in your hand together with Millifolia, you are safe from all fears and fancies that frequently deceive men. If you mix it with a decoction of the hemlock, and rub your hands with it, and put the rest in water that contains fish, you will find the fish to collect around your hands. Whenever you pull your hands out of the water, the fish disappear by returning to their former places.

HELIOTROPE (SUN-FLOWER) A MEANS TO PREVENT CALUMNIATION.

The virtues of this plant are miraculous. If it be collected in the sign of the lion, in the month of August, and wrapped up in a laurel leaf together with the tooth of a wolf. Whoever carries this about him, will never be addressed harshly by anyone, but all will speak to him kindly and peaceably. And if anything has been stolen from you put this under your head during the night, and you will surely see the whole figure of the thief. This has been found true.

TO HEAL A SORE MOUTH.

*If you have the scurvy, or quinsy too,
I breathe my breath three times into you. + + +*

A GOOD REMEDY FOR CONSUMPTION.

Consumption, I order thee out of the bones into the flesh, out of the flesh upon the skin, out of the skin into the wilds of the forest.

SWALLOW-WORT.

A means to overcome and end all fighting and anger, and to cause a sick man to weep when his health is restored, or to sing with a cheerful voice when on his death bed; also a very good remedy for dim eyes or shining of the eyes. This weed grows at the time when the swallows build their nests or eagles breed. If a man carries this about him, together with the heart of a mole, he shall overcome all fighting and anger. If these things are put upon the head of a sick man, he shall weep at the restoration of his health, and sing with a cheerful voice when he comes to die. When the swallow-wort blooms, the flowers must be pounded up and boiled, and then the water must be poured off into another vessel, and again be placed to the fire and carefully skimmed; then it must be filtered through a cloth and preserved, and whosoever has dim eyes or shining eyes, may bathe his eyes with it, and they will become clear and sound.

FOR THE HOLLOW HORN IN COWS.

Bore a small hole in the hollow horn, milk the same cow, and squirt her milk into the horn; this is the best cure. Use a syringe to squirt the milk into the horn.

A VERY GOOD AND CERTAIN MEANS OF DESTROYING THE WHEAL IN THE EYE.

Take a dirty plate; if you have none, you can easily dirty one, and the person for whom you are using sympathy shall in a few minutes find the pain much relieved. You must hold that side of the plate or dish, which is used in eating, toward the eye. While you hold the plate before the eye, you must say:

*Dirty plate, I press thee,
Wheal in the eye, do flee. + + +*

TO MAKE CHICKENS LAY MANY EGGS.

Take the dung of rabbits, pound it to powder, mix it with bran, wet the mixture till it forms lumps, and feed your chickens with it, and they will keep on laying a great many eggs.

WORDS TO BE SPOKEN WHILE MAKING DIVINATORY WANDS.

In making divinatory wands, they must be broken as before directed, and while breaking and before using them, the following words must be spoken:

*Divining rod, do thou keep that power,
Which God gave unto thee at the very first hour.*

HOW TO DESTROY A TAPE-WORM.

Worm, I conjure thee by the living God, that thou shalt flee this blood and this flesh, like as God the Lord will shun that judge who judges unjustly, although he might have judged aright. + + +

A GOOD REMEDY FOR THE BOTS IN HORSES.

Every time you use this, you must stroke the horse down with the hand three times, and lead it about three times holding its head toward the sun, saying: "The Holy One saith: Joseph passed over a field and there he found three small worms; the one being black, another being brown, and the third being red; thou shalt die and be dead."

HOW TO CURE A BURN.

Three holy men went out walking,
They did bless the heat and the burning;
They blessed that it might not increase;
They blessed that it might quickly cease! + + +

TO CURE THE BITE OF A SNAKE.

*God has created all things and they were good;
Thou only, serpent, art damned,
Cursed be thou and thy sting.
Zing, zing, zing!*

SECURITY AGAINST MAD DOGS.

*Dog, hold thy nose to the ground,
God has made me and thee, hound! + + +*

This you must repeat in the direction of the dog; and the three crosses you must make toward the dog, and the words must be spoken before he sees you.

TO REMOVE PAIN AND HEAL UP WOUNDS WITH THREE SWITCHES.

*With this switch and Christ's dear blood,
I banish your pain and do you good! + + +*

Mind it well: you must in one cut, sever from a tree, a young branch pointing toward sunrise, and then make three pieces of it, which you successively put in the wound. Holding them in your hand, you take the one toward your right side first. Everything prescribed in this book must be used three times, even if the three crosses should not be affixed. Words are always to have an interval of half an hour, and between the second and third time should pass a whole night, except where it is otherwise directed. The above three sticks, after the end of each has been put into the wound as before directed, must be put in a piece of white paper, and placed where they will be warm and dry.

REMEDY FOR FEVER, WORMS, AND THE COLIC.

*Jerusalem, thou Jewish city,
In which Christ our Lord, was born,
Thou shalt turn into water and blood,
Because it is for [name] fever, worms, and colic good.*

HOW TO CURE WEAKNESS OF THE LIMBS.

Take the buds of the birch tree, or the inner bark of the root of the tree at the time of the budding of the birch, and make a tea of it, and drink it occasionally through the day. Yet, after having used it for two weeks, it must be discontinued for a while, before it is resorted to again; and during the two weeks of its use it is well at times to use water for a day instead of the tea.

ANOTHER REMEDY FOR WEAKNESS.

Take Bittany and St. John's wort, and put them in good old rye whiskey. To drink some of this in the morning before having taken anything else, is very wholesome and good. A tea made of the acorns of the white oak is very good for weakness of the limbs.

TO MAKE HORSES THAT REFUSE THEIR FEED TO EAT AGAIN — ESPECIALLY APPLICABLE WHEN THEY ARE AFFLICTED IN THIS MANNER ON THE PUBLIC ROADS.

Open the jaws of the horse, which refuses his feed, and knock three times on his palate. This will certainly cause the horse to eat again without hesitation, and to go along willingly.

A GOOD METHOD OF DESTROYING RATS AND MICE.

Every time you bring grain into your barn, you must, in putting down the three first sheaves, repeat the following words: "Rats and mice, these three sheaves I give to you, in order that you may not destroy any of my wheat." The name of the kind of grain must also be mentioned.

TO CURE ANY EXCRESCENCE OR WEN ON A HORSE.

Take any bone which you accidentally find, for you dare not be looking for it, and rub the wen of the horse with it, always bearing in mind that it must be done in the decreasing moon, and the wen will certainly disappear. The bone, however, must be replaced as it was lying before.

HOW TO PREPARE A GOOD EYE-WATER.

Take one ounce of white vitriol and one ounce of sugar of lead, dissolve them in oil of rosemary, and put it in a quart bottle, which you fill up with rose-water. Bathe the eyes with it night and morning.

HOW TO CAUSE MALE OR FEMALE THIEVES TO STAND STILL, WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO MOVE BACKWARD OR FORWARD.

In using any prescription of this book in regard to making others stand still, it is best to be walking about; and repeat the following three times:

“Oh, Peter, oh Peter, borrow the power from God; what I shall bind with the bands of a Christian hand, shall be bound; all male and female thieves, be they great or small, young or old, shall be spell-bound, by the power of God, and not be able to walk forward or backward until I see them with my eyes, and give them leave with my tongue, except it be that they count for me all the stones that may be between heaven and earth, all rain-drops, all the leaves and all the grasses in the world. This I pray for the repentance of my enemies.”

+ + +

Repeat your articles of faith and the Lord's Prayer.

If the thieves are to remain alive, the sun dare not shine upon them before their release. There are two ways of releasing them, which will be particularly stated: The first is this, that you tell them, in the name of St. John, to leave; the other is as follows: “The words which have bound thee shall give thee free.” + + +

TO CURE THE SWEENEY IN HORSES.

Take a piece of old bacon, and cut it into small pieces, put them in a pan and roast them well, put in a handful of fish-worms, a gill of oats and three spoonfuls of salt into it; roast the whole of this until it turns black, and then filter it through a cloth; after which you put a gill of soft soap, half a gill of rye whiskey, half a gill of vinegar, and half a pint of rain-water to it; mix it well, and smear it over the part affected with sweeney on the third, the sixth, and the ninth day of the new moon, and warm it with an oaken board.

HOW TO MAKE MOLASSES.

Take pumpkins, boil them, press the juice out of them, and boil the juice to a proper consistence. There is nothing else necessary. The author of this book, John George Hohman, has tasted this molasses, thinking it was the genuine kind, until the people of the house told him what it was.

TO MAKE GOOD BEER.

Take a handful of hops, five or six gallons of water, about three tablespoonfuls of ginger, half a gallon of molasses; filter the water, hops and ginger into a tub containing the molasses.

CURE FOR THE EPILEPSY.

Take a turtle dove, cut its throat, and let the person afflicted with epilepsy, drink the blood.

ANOTHER WAY TO MAKE CATTLE RETURN HOME.

Feed your cattle out of a pot or kettle used in preparing your dinner, and they will always return to your stable.

A VERY GOOD REMEDY TO CURE SORES.

Boil the bulbs (roots) of the white lily in cream, and put it on the sore in the form of a plaster. Southern-wort has the same effect.

A GOOD CURE FOR WOUNDS.

Take the bones of a calf, and burn them until they turn to powder, and then strew it into the wound. The powder prevents the flesh from putrefying, and is therefore of great importance in healing the wound.

TO MAKE AN OIL OUT OF PAPER, WHICH IS GOOD FOR SORE EYES.

A man from Germany informed me that to burn two sheets of white paper would produce about three drops of oil or water, which would heal all sores in or about the eye if rubbed with it. Any affection of the eyes can be cured in this way, as long as the apple of the eye is sound.

TO DESTROY CRAB-LICE.

Take capuchin powder, mix it with hog's lard, and smear yourself with it. Or boil cammock, and wash the place where the lice keep themselves.

TO PREVENT THE WORST KIND OF PAPER FROM BLOTTING.

Dissolve alum in water, and put it on the paper, and I, Hohman, would like to see who cannot write on it, when it is dried.

A VERY GOOD REMEDY FOR THE GRAVEL.

The author of this book, John George Hohman, applied this remedy, and soon felt relieved. I knew a man who could find no relief from the medicine of any doctor; he then used the following remedy, to wit: he ate every morning seven peach-stones before tasting anything else, which relieved him very much; but as he had the gravel very bad, he was obliged to use it constantly. I, Hohman, have used it for several weeks. I still feel a touch of it now and then, yet I had it so badly that I cried out aloud every time that I had to make water. I owe a thousand thanks to God and the person who told me of this remedy.

A GOOD REMEDY FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT KEEP THEIR WATER.

Burn a hog's bladder to powder, and take it inwardly.

TO REMOVE A WEN DURING THE CRESCENT MOON.

Look over the wen, directly towards the moon, and say *Whatever grows, does grow; and whatever diminishes, does diminish.*" This must be said three times in the same breath.

TO DESTROY FIELD-MICE AND MOLES.

Put unslaked lime in their holes and they will disappear.

TO REMOVE A SCUM OR SKIN FROM THE EYE.

Before sunrise on St. Bartholomew's Day, you must dig up four or five roots of the dandelion weed, taking good care to get the ends of the roots; then you must procure a rag and a thread that have never been in the water; the thread, which dare not have a single knot in it, is used in sewing up the roots into the rag, and the whole is then to be hung before the eye until the scum disappears. The tape by which it is fastened must never have been in the water,

FOR DEAFNESS, ROARING OR BUZZING IN THE EAR, AND FOR TOOTHACHE.

A few drops of refined camphor-oil put upon cotton, and thus applied to the aching tooth, relieves very much. When put in the ear it strengthens the hearing and removes the roaring and whizzing in the same.

A GOOD WAY TO CAUSE CHILDREN TO CUT THEIR TEETH WITHOUT PAIN.

Boil the brain of a rabbit and rub the gums of the children with it, and their teeth will grow without pain to them.

FOR VOMITING AND DIARRHOEA.

Take pulverized cloves and eat them together with bread soaked in red wine, and you will soon find relief. The cloves may be put upon the bread.

TO HEAL BURNS.

Pound or press the juice of male fern, and put it on the burnt spots and they will heal very fast. Better yet, however, if you smear the above juice upon a rag, and put it on like a plaster.

VERY GOOD CURE FOR WEAKNESS OF THE LIMBS, FOR THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLOOD, FOR THE INVIGORATING OF THE HEAD AND HEART, AND TO REMOVE GIDDINESS, ETC.

Take two drops of oil of cloves in a tablespoonful of white wine early in the morning, and before eating anything else. This is also good for the mother-pains and the colic. The oil of cloves which you buy in the drug stores will answer the purpose. These remedies are also applicable to cure the cold when it settles in the bowels, and to stop vomiting. A few drops of this oil poured upon cotton and applied to the aching teeth, relieves the pain.

FOR DYSENTERY AND DIARRHOEA.

Take the moss off of trees, and boil it in red wine, and let those who are affected with those diseases drink it.

CURE FOR THE TOOTHACHE.

Hohman, the author of this book, has cured the severest toothache more than sixty times, with this remedy, and, out of the sixty times he applied it, it failed but once in affecting a cure. Take blue vitriol and put a piece of it in the hollow tooth, yet not too much; spit out the water that collects in the mouth, and be careful to swallow none. I do not know whether it is good for teeth that are not hollow, but I should judge it would cure any kind of toothache.

ADVICE TO PREGNANT WOMEN.

Pregnant women must be very careful not to use any camphor; and no camphor should be administered to those women who have the mother-fits.

CURE FOR THE BITE OF A MAD DOG.

A certain Mr. Valentine Kittering, of Dauphin County, has communicated to the Senate of Pennsylvania a sure remedy for the bite of any kind of mad animals. He says that his ancestors had already used it in Germany 250 years ago, and that he had always found it to answer the purpose, during a residence of fifty years in the United States. He only published it from motives of humanity. This remedy consists in the weed called *Chick-weed*. It is a summer plant, known to the Germans and Swiss by the names of *Gauchneil*, *Rothea Meyer*, or *Rother Huehnerdarm*. In England it is called *Red Pimpernel*; and its botanical name is *Angelica Phonicaea*. It must be gathered in June when in full bloom and dried in the shade, and then pulverized. The dose of this for a grown person is a small tablespoonful, or in weight a drachm and a scruple, at once, in beer or water. For children the dose is the same, yet it must be administered at three different times. In applying it to animals, it must be used green, cut to pieces and mixed with bran or other feed. For the hogs the pulverized weed is made into little balls by mixing it with flour and water. It can also be put on bread and butter, or in honey, molasses, etc. The Rev. Henry Muhlenberg says that in Germany 30 grains of this powder are given four times a day, the first day, then one dose a day for a whole week; while at the same time the wound is washed out with a decoction of the weed, and then the powder strewed in it. Mr. Kittering says that he in all instances administered but one dose, with the most happy results. This is said to be the same remedy through which the late Doctor William Stoy effected so many cures.

A VERY GOOD MEANS TO INCREASE THE GROWTH OF WOOL ON SHEEP, AND TO PREVENT DISEASE AMONG THEM.

William Ellis, in his excellent work on the English manner of raising sheep, relates the following: I know a tenant who had a flock of sheep that produced an unusual quantity of wool. He informed me that he was in the habit of washing his sheep with buttermilk just after shearing them, which was the cause of the unusual growth of wool; because it is a known fact that buttermilk does not only improve the growth of sheep's wool, but also the hair of other animals. Those who have no buttermilk may substitute common milk, mixed with salt and water, which will answer nearly as well to wash the sheep just sheared. And I guarantee that by rightly applying this means, you will not only have a great increase of wool, but the sheep-lice and their entire brood will be destroyed. It also cures all manner of scab and itch, and prevents them from taking cold.

A WELL-TRIED PLASTER TO REMOVE MORTIFICATION.

Take six hen's eggs and boil them in hot ashes until they are right hard; then take the yellow of the eggs and fry them in a gill of lard until they are quite black; then put a handful of rue with it, and afterward filter it through a cloth. When this is done add a gill of sweet oil to it. It will take most effect where the plaster for a female is prepared by a male, and the plaster for a male prepared by a female.

A GOOD REMEDY FOR THE POLL-EVIL IN HORSES.

Take white turpentine, rub it over the poll-evil with your hand, and then melt it with a hot iron, so that it runs into the wound. After this take neatsfoot oil or goose grease and rub it into the wound in the same manner, and for three days in succession, commencing on the last Friday of the last quarter of the moon.

FOR THE SCURVY AND SORE THROAT.

Speak the following, and it will certainly help you: Job went through the land, holding his staff close in the hand, when God the Lord did meet him, and said to him: Job, what art thou grieved at? Job said: Oh God, why should I not be sad? My throat and my mouth are rotting away. Then said the Lord to Job: In yonder valley there is a well which will cure thee [*name*], and thy mouth, and thy throat, in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen. This must be spoken three times in the morning and three times in the evening; and where it reads "which will cure," you must blow three times in the child's mouth.

A VERY GOOD PLASTER.

Take wormwood, rue, medels, sheeprip-wort, pointy plantain, in equal proportions, a larger proportion of bees'-wax and tallow, and some spirits of turpentine; put it together in a pot, boil it well, and then strain it, and you have a very good plaster.

TO STOP BLEEDING.

*I walk through a green forest;
There I find three wells, cool and cold;
The first is called courage,
The second is called good,
And the third is called stop the blood. + + +*

ANOTHER WAY TO STOP BLEEDING, AND TO HEAL WOUNDS IN MAN AS WELL AS ANIMALS.

On Christ's grave there grows three roses; the first is kind, the second is valued among the rulers, and the third says: blood, thou must stop, and wound, thou must heal. Everything prescribed for man in this book is also applicable to animals.

FOR GAINING A LAWFUL SUIT.

It reads, if anyone has to settle any just claim by way of a law suit let him take some of the largest kind of sage and write the name of the twelve apostles on the leaves, and put them in his shoes before entering the courthouse, and he shall certainly gain the suit.

FOR THE SWELLING OF CATTLE.

To Desh break no Flesh, but to Desh! While saying this, run your hand along the back of the animal. + + +

NOTE. — The hand must be put upon the bare skin in all cases of using sympathetic words.

AN EASY METHOD OF CATCHING FISH.

In a vessel of white glass must be put: 8 grains of civit, (musk), and as much castorium; two ounces of eel-fat, and 4 ounces of unsalted butter; after which the vessel must be well closed, and put in some place where it will keep moderately warm for nine or ten days, and then the composition must be well stirred with a stick until it is perfectly mixed.

APPLICATION. — 1. *In using the hooks.* — Worms or insects used for baiting the hooks must first be moistened with this composition, and then put in a bladder or box, which may be carried in the pocket. 2. *In using the net.* — Small balls formed of the soft part of fresh bread must be dipped in this composition and then by means of thread fastened inside of the net before throwing it into the water. 3. *Catching Fish with the hand.* — Besmear your legs or boots with this composition before entering the water at the place where the fish are expected, and they will collect in great numbers around you.

A VERY GOOD AND SAFE REMEDY FOR RHEUMATISM.

From one to two dollars have often been paid for this recipe alone, it being the best and surest remedy to cure the rheumatism. Let it be known therefore: Take a piece of cloth, some tape and thread, neither of which must ever have been in water; the thread must not have a single knot in it, and

the cloth and tape must have been spun by a child not quite or at least not more than seven years of age. The letter given below must be carefully sewed in the piece of cloth, and tied around the neck, unbesheathed; on the first Friday in the decreasing moon; and immediately after hanging it around the neck, the Lord's prayer and the articles of faith must be repeated. What now follows must be written in the before-mentioned letter:

"May God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost grant it. Amen. Seek immediately, and seek; thus commandeth the Lord thy God, through the first man whom God did love upon earth. Seek immediately, and seek; thus commandeth the Lord thy God, through Luke, the Evangelist, and through Paul, the Apostle. Seek immediately, and seek; thus commandeth the Lord thy God, through the twelve messengers. Seek immediately, and seek; thus commandeth the Lord thy God by the first man that God might be loved. Seek immediately, and convulse; thus commandeth the Lord thy God, through the Holy Fathers, who have been made by divine and holy writ. Seek immediately, and convulse; thus commandeth the Lord thy God, through the dear and holy angels, and through his paternal and divine Omnipotence, and his heavenly confidence and endurance. Seek immediately, and convulse; thus commandeth the Lord thy God, through the burning oven which was preserved by the blessing of God. Seek immediately, and convulse; thus commandeth the Lord thy God, through all power and might, through the prophet Jonah who was preserved in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights, by the blessing of God. Seek immediately, and convulse; thus commandeth the Lord thy God, through all the power and might which proceed from divine humility, and in all-eternity; whereby no harm be done unto + N + nor unto any part of his body be they the ravenous convulsions, or the yellow convulsions, or the white convulsions, or the red convulsions, or the black convulsions, or by whatever name convulsions may be called; these all shall do no harm unto thee + N + nor to any part of thy body, nor to thy head, nor to thy neck, nor to thy heart, nor to thy stomach, nor to any of thy veins, nor to thy arms, nor to thy legs, nor to thy eyes, nor to thy tongue, nor to any part or parcel of thy body. This I write for thee + N + in these words, and in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen. God bless it. Amen."

Notice. — If anyone write such a letter for another, the Christian name of the person must be mentioned in it; as you will observe, where the N stands singly in the above letter, there must be the name.

A GOOD WAY TO DESTROY WORMS IN BEE-HIVES.

With very little trouble and at the expense of a quarter dollar, you can certainly free your bee-hives from worms for a whole year. Get from an apothecary store the powder called Pensses Blum, which will not injure the bees in the least. The application of it is as follows: For one bee-hive you take as much of this powder as the point of your knife will hold, mix it with one ounce of good whiskey, and put it in a common vial; then make a hole in the bee-hive and pour it in thus mixed with the whiskey, which is sufficient for one hive at once. Make the hole so that it can be easily poured in. As said before, a quarter dollar's worth of this powder is enough for one hive.

RECIPE FOR MAKING A PASTE TO PREVENT GUN-BARRELS FROM RUSTING, WHETHER IRON OR STEEL.

Take an ounce of bear's fat, half an ounce of badger's grease, half an ounce of snake's fat, one ounce of almond oil, and a quarter of an ounce of pulverized indigo, and melt it altogether in a new vessel over a fire, stir it well, and put it afterward into some vessel. In using it, a lump as large as a common nut must be put upon a piece of woollen cloth and then rubbed on the barrel and lock of the gun, and it will keep the barrel from rusting.

TO MAKE A WICK WHICH IS NEVER CONSUMED.

Take an ounce of asbestos and boil it in a quart of strong lye for two hours; then pour off the lye and clarify what remains by pouring rain-water on it three or four times, after which you can form a wick from it which will never be consumed by the fire.

A MORNING PRAYER TO BE SPOKEN BEFORE STARTING ON A JOURNEY, WHICH WILL SAVE THE PERSON FROM ALL MISHAPS.

I (here the name is to be pronounced) will go on a journey to-day; I will walk upon God's way, and walk where God himself did walk, and our dear Lord Jesus Christ, and our dearest Virgin with her dear little babe, with her seven rings and her true things. Oh, thou! my dear Lord Jesus Christ, I am thine own, that no dog may bite me, no wolf bite me, and no murderer secretly approach me; save me, O my God, from sudden death! I am in God's hands, and there I will bind myself. In God's hands I am by our Lord Jesus' five wounds, that any gun or other arms may not do me any more harm than the virginity of our Holy Virgin Mary was injured by the favor of her beloved Jesus. After this say three Lord's prayers, the Ave Maria, and the articles of faith.

A SAFE AND APPROVED MEANS TO BE APPLIED IN CASES OF FIRE AND PESTILENCE.

Welcome, thou fiery fiend! do not extend further than thou already hast. This I count unto thee as a repentant act, in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. I command unto thee, fire, by the power of God, which createth and worketh everything, that thou now do cease, and not extend any further as certainly as Christ was standing on the Jordan's stormy banks, being baptized by John the holy man. This I count unto thee as a repentant act in the name of the holy Trinity. I command unto thee, fire, by the power of God, now to abate thy flames; as certainly as Mary retained her virginity before all ladies who retained theirs, so chaste and pure; therefore, fire, cease thy wrath. This I count unto thee as a repentant act in the name of the holy Trinity. I command unto thee, fire, to abate thy heat, by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, which he has shed for us, and our sins and transgressions. This I count unto thee, fire, as a repentant act, in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Jesus of Nazareth, a king of the Jews, help us from this dangerous fire, and guard this land and its bounds from all epidemic disease and pestilence.

REMARKS. — This has been discovered by a Christian Gypsy King of Egypt. Anno 1740, on the 10th of June, six gypsies were executed on the gallows in the kingdom of Prussia. The seventh of their party was a man of eighty years of age and was to be executed by the sword on the 16th of the same month. But fortunately for him, quite unexpectedly, a conflagration broke out, and the old Gypsy was taken to the fire to try his arts, which he successfully did to the great surprise of all present, by bespeaking the conflagration in a manner that it wholly or entirely ceased and disappeared in less than ten minutes. Upon this, the proof having been given in daytime, he received pardon and was set at liberty. This was confirmed and attested by the government of the King of Prussia, and the General Superintendent at Koenigsberg, and given to the public in print. It was first published at Koenigsberg in Prussia, by Alexander Bausman, Anno 1745. Whoever has this letter in his house will be free from all danger of fire, as well as from lightning. If a pregnant woman carries this letter about her, neither enchantment nor evil spirits can injure her or her child. Further, if anybody has this letter in his house, or carries it about his person, he will be safe from the injuries of pestilence. While saying these sentences, one must pass three times around the fire. This has availed in all instances.

TO PREVENT CONFLAGRATION.

Take a black chicken, in the morning or evening, cut its head off and throw it upon the ground; cut its stomach out, yet leave it altogether; then try to get a piece of a shirt which was worn by a chaste virgin during her terms, and cut out a piece as large as a common dish from that part which is bloodiest. These two things wrap up together, then try to get an egg which was laid on maunday Thursday. These three things put together in wax; then put them in a pot holding eight quarts, and bury it under the threshold of your house, with the aid of God, and as long as there remains a single stick of your house together, no conflagration will happen. If your house should happen to be on fire already in front and behind, the fire will nevertheless do no injury to you nor to your children. This is done by the power of God, and is quite certain and infallible. If fire should break out unexpectedly, then try to get a whole shirt in which your servant-maid had her terms or a sheet on which a child was born, and throw it into the fire, wrapped up in a bundle, and without saying anything. This will certainly stop it.

**TO PREVENT WITCHES FROM BEWITCHING
CATTLE, TO BE WRITTEN AND PLACED IN THE
STABLE; AND AGAINST BAD MEN AND EVIL
SPIRITS WHICH NIGHTLY TORMENT OLD AND
YOUNG PEOPLE, TO BE WRITTEN AND PLACED
ON THE BEDSTEAD.**

“Trotter Head, I forbid thee my house and premises; I forbid thee my horse and cow-stable; I forbid thee my bedstead, that thou mayest not breathe upon me; breathe into some other house, until thou hast ascended every hill, until thou hast counted every fence-post, and until thou hast crossed every water. And thus dear day may come again into my house, in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.” This will certainly protect and free all persons and animals from witchcraft.

TO EXTINGUISH FIRE WITHOUT WATER.

Write the following words on each side of a plate, and throw it into the fire, and it will be extinguished forthwith:

S A T O R
A R E P O
T E N E T
O P E R A
R O T A S

**TO PREVENT BAD PEOPLE FROM
GETTING ABOUT THE CATTLE.**

Take wormwood, gith, five-finger weed, and assafoetida; three cents' worth of each; the straw of horse beans, some dirt swept together behind the door of the stable and a little salt. Tie these all up together with a tape, and put the bundle in a hole about the threshold over which your cattle pass in and out, and cover it well with lignum-vitae wood. This will certainly be of use.

ANOTHER METHOD OF STOPPING FIRE.

Our dear Sarah journeyed through the land, having a fiery hot brand in her hand. The fiery brand heats; the fiery brand sweats. Fiery brand, stop your heat; fiery brand, stop your sweat.

HOW TO FASTEN OR SPELL-BIND ANYTHING.

You say, Christ's cross and Christ's crown, Christ Jesus' colored blood, be thou every hour good. God, the Father, is before me; God, the Son, is beside me; God, the Holy Ghost, is behind me. Whoever now is stronger than these three persons may come, by day or night, to attack me." + + +

Then say the Lord's prayer three times.

ANOTHER WAY OF FASTENING OR SPELL-BINDING.

After repeating the above, you speak, "At every step may Jesus walk with (/name/). He is my head; I am his limb; therefore, Jesus, be with (/name/).

A BENEDICTION TO PREVENT FIRE.

"The bitter sorrows and the death of our dear Lord Jesus Christ shall prevail. Fire and wind and great heat and all that is within the power of these elements, I command thee, through the Lord Jesus Christ, who has spoken to the winds and the waters, and they obeyed him. By these powerful words spoken by Jesus, I command, threaten, and inform thee, fire, flame, and heat, and your powers as elements, to flee forthwith. The holy, rosy blood of our dear Lord Jesus Christ may rule it. Thou, fire, and wind, and great heat, I command thee, as the Lord did, by his holy angels, command the great heat in the fiery oven to leave those three holy men, Shadrach and his companions, Meshach and Abednego, untouched, which was done accordingly. Thus thou shalt abate, thou fire, flame, and great heat, the Almighty God having spoken in creating the four elements, together with heaven and earth; Fiat! Fiat! Fiat! that is: It shall be in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

HOW TO RELIEVE PERSONS OR ANIMALS AFTER BEING BEWITCHED.

Three false tongues have bound thee, three holy tongues have spoken for thee. The first is God the Father, the second is God the Son, and the third is God the Holy Ghost. They will give you blood and flesh, peace and comfort. Flesh and blood are grown upon thee, born on thee, and lost on thee. If any man trample on thee with his horse, God will bless thee, and the holy Ciprian; has any woman trampled on thee, God and the body of Mary shall bless thee; if any servant has given you trouble, I bless thee through God and the laws of heaven; if any servant-maid or woman has led you astray, God and the heavenly constellations shall bless thee. Heaven is above thee, the earth is beneath thee, and thou art between. I bless thee against all bramplings{sic} by horses. Our dear Lord Jesus Christ walked about in his bitter afflictions and death; and all the Jews that had spoken and promised, trembled in their falsehoods and mockery. Look, now trembleth the Son of God, as if he had the itch, said the Jews. And then spake Jesus: I have not the itch and no one shall have it. Whoever will assist me to carry the cross, him will I free from the itch, in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

TO PROTECT HOUSES AND PREMISES AGAINST SICKNESS AND THEFT.

Ito, alto Massa Dandi Bando, III. Amen

J. R. N. R. J.

Our Lord Jesus Christ stepped into the hall, and the Jews searched him everywhere. Thus shalt those who now speak evil of me with their false tongues, and contend against me, one day bear sorrows, be silenced, dumbstruck, intimidated, and abused, forever and ever, by the glory of God. The glory of God shall assist me in this. Do thou aid me J. J. J. forever and ever. Amen.

AGAINST MISHAPS AND DANGERS IN THE HOUSE.

Sanct Matheus, Sanct Marcus, Sanct Lucas, Sanct Johannis.

A DIRECTION FOR A GYPSY SENTENCE, TO BE CARRIED ABOUT THE PERSON AS A PROTECTION UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES.

Like unto the prophet Jonas, as a type of Christ, who was guarded for three days and three nights in the belly of a whale, thus shall the Almighty God, as a Father, guard and protect me from all evil. J. J. J.

AGAINST EVIL SPIRITS AND ALL MANNER OF WITCHCRAFT.

I.

N. I. R.

I.

SANCTUS SPIRITUS.

I.

N. I. R.

I.

All this be guarded here in time, and there in eternity. Amen. You must write all the above on a piece of white paper and carry it about you. The characters or letters above signify: "God bless me here in time, and there eternally."

AGAINST SWELLINGS.

"Three pure virgins went out on a journey to inspect a swelling and sickness. The first one said, It is hoarse. The second said, It is not. The third said, If it is not, then will our Lord Jesus Christ come." This must be spoken in the name of the Holy Trinity.

HOW TO TREAT A COW AFTER THE MILK IS TAKEN FROM HER.

Give to the cow three spoonfuls of her last milk, and say to the spirits in her blood: "Ninny has done it, and I have swallowed her in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen." Pray what you choose at the same time.

AGAINST ADVERSITIES AND ALL MANNER OF CONTENTION.

Power, hero, Prince of Peace, J. J. J.

AGAINST DANGER AND DEATH, TO BE CARRIED ABOUT THE PERSON.

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he will call me from the grave, ect.

ANOTHER METHOD OF TREATING A SICK COW.

J. The cross of Jesus Christ poured out milk;

J. The cross of Jesus Christ poured out water;

J. The cross of Jesus Christ has poured them out;

These lines must be written on three pieces of white paper; then take the milk of the sick cow and these three pieces of paper, put them in a pot, and scrape a little of the skull of a criminal; close it well, and put it over a hot fire, and the witch will have to die. If you take the three pieces of paper, with the writing on them, in your mouth and go out before your house, speak three times, and then give them to your cattle, you shall not only see all the witches, but your cattle will also get well again.

AGAINST THE FEVER.

Pray early in the morning, and then turn your shirt around the left sleeve, and say: Turn, thou, shirt, and thou, fever, do likewise turn. (Do not forget to mention the name of the person having the fever.) This, I tell thee, for thy repentance sake, in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen. If you repeat this for three successive mornings the fever will disappear.

TO SPELL-BIND A THIEF SO THAT HE CANNOT STIR.

This benediction must be spoken on a Thursday morning, before sunrise and in the open air: "Thus shall rule it, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen. Thirty-three Angels speak to each other coming to administer in company with Mary. Then spoke dear Daniel, the holy one: Trust, my dear woman, I see some thieves coming who intend stealing your dear babe; this I cannot conceal from you. Then spake our dear Lady to Saint Peter; I have bound with a band, through Christ's hand; therefore, my thieves are bound even by the hand of Christ, if they wish to steal mine own, in the house, in the chest, upon the meadow or fields, in the woods, in the orchard, in the vineyard, or in the garden, or wherever they intend to steal. Our dear Lady said: Whoever chooses may steal; yet if anyone does steal, he shall stand like a buck, he shall stand like a stake, and shall count all the stones upon the earth, and all the stars in the heavens. Thus I give thee leave, and command every spirit to be master over every thief, by the guardianship of Saint Daniel, and by the burden of this world's goods. And the countenance shall be unto thee, that thou canst not move from the spot, as long as my tongue in the flesh shall not give thee leave. This I command thee by the Holy Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, by the power and might by which he has created heaven and earth, by the host of all the angels, and by all the saints of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen." If you wish to set the thief free, you must tell him to leave in the name of St. John.

ANOTHER WAY TO STILL-BIND THIEVES.

Ye thieves, I conjure you, to be obedient like Jesus Christ, who obeyed his Heavenly Father unto the cross, and to stand without moving out of my sight, in the name of the Trinity. I command you by the power of God and the incarnation of Jesus Christ, not to move out of my sight, + + + like Jesus Christ was standing on Jordan's stormy banks to be baptized by John. And furthermore, I conjure you, horse and rider, to stand still and not to move out of my sight, like Jesus Christ did stand when he was about to be nailed to the cross to release the fathers of the church from the bonds of hell. Ye thieves, I bind you with the same bonds with which Jesus our Lord has bound hell; and thus ye shall be bound; + + + and the same words that bind you shall also release you.

TO EFFECT THE SAME IN LESS TIME.

Thou horseman and footman, you are coming under your hats; you are scattered! With the blood of Jesus Christ, with his five holy wounds, thy barrel, thy gun, and thy pistol are bound; sabre, sword, and knife are enchanted and bound, in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

This must be spoken three times.

TO RELEASE SPELL-BOUND PERSONS.

You horsemen and footmen, whom I here conjured at this time, you may pass on in the name of Jesus Christ, through the word of God and the will of Christ; ride ye on now and pass.

TO COMPEL A THIEF TO RETURN STOLEN GOODS.

Early in the morning before sunrise you must go to a pear tree, and take with you three nails out of a coffin, or three horse-shoe nails that were never used, and holding these toward the rising sun, you must say: "Oh, thief, I bind you by the first nail, which I drive into thy skull and thy brain, to return the goods thou hast stolen to their former place; thou shalt feel as sick and as anxious to see men, and to see the place you stole from, as felt the disciple Judas after betraying Jesus. I bind thee by the other nail, which I drive into your lungs and liver, to return the stolen goods to their former place; thou shalt feel as sick and as anxious to see men, and to see the place you have stolen from, as did Pilate in the fires of hell. The third nail I shall drive into thy foot, oh thief, in order that thou shalt return the stolen goods to the very same place from which thou hast stolen them. Oh, thief, I bind thee and compel thee, by the three holy nails which were driven through the hands and feet of Jesus Christ, to return the stolen goods to the very same place from which thou hast stolen them. + + + The three nails, however, must be greased with the grease from an executed criminal or other sinful person.

A BENEDICTION FOR ALL PURPOSES.

Jesus, I will arise; Jesus, do thou accompany me; Jesus, do thou lock my heart into thine, and let my body and my soul be commended unto thee. The Lord is crucified. May God guard my senses that evil spirits may not overcome me, in the name of God the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

TO WIN EVERY GAME ONE ENGAGES IN.

Tie the heart of a bat with a red silken string to the right arm, and you will win every game at cards you play.

AGAINST BURNS.

Our dear Lord Jesus Christ going on a journey, saw a firebrand burning; it was Saint Lorenzo stretched out on a roast. He rendered him assistance and consolation; he lifted his divine hand and blessed the brand; he stopped it from spreading deeper and wider. Thus may the burning be blessed in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

ANOTHER REMEDY FOR BURNS.

Clear out, brand, but never in; be thou cold or hot, thou must cease to burn. May God guard thy blood and thy flesh, thy marrow and thy bones, and every artery, great or small. They all shall be guarded and protected in the name of God against inflammation and mortification, in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

TO BE GIVEN TO CATTLE AGAINST WITCHCRAFT.

S A T O R
A R E P O
T E N E T
O P E R A
R O T A S

This must be written on paper and the cattle made to wallow it in their feed.

HOW TO TIE UP AND HEAL WOUNDS.

Speak the following: "This wound I tie up in three names, in order that thou mayest take from it heat, water, falling off of the flesh, swelling, and all that may be injurious about the swelling, in the name of the Holy Trinity." This must be spoken three times; then draw a string three times around the wound, and put it under the corner of the house toward the East, and say: "I put thee there, + + + in order that thou mayest take unto thyself the gathered water, the swelling, and the running, and all that may be injurious about the wound. Amen." Then repeat the Lord's Prayer and some good hymn.

TO TAKE THE PAIN OUT OF A FRESH WOUND.

Our dear Lord Jesus Christ had a great many biles and wounds, and yet he never had them dressed. They did not grow old, they were not cut, nor were they ever found running. Jonas was blind, and I spoke to the heavenly child, as true as five holy wounds were inflicted.

A BENEDICTION AGAINST WORMS.

Peter and Jesus went out upon the fields; they ploughed three furrows, and ploughed up three worms. The one was white, the other was black, and the third one was red. Now all the worms are dead, in the name + + + Repeat these words three times.

AGAINST EVERY EVIL INFLUENCE.

Lord Jesus, thy wounds so red will guard me against death.

TO RETAIN THE RIGHT IN COURT AND COUNCIL.

Jesus Nazareus, Rex Judeorum.

First carry these characters with you, written on paper, and then repeat the following words: "I

(*name*) appear before the house of the Judge. Three dead men look out of the window; one having no tongue, the other having no lungs, and the third was sick, blind and dumb." This is intended to be used when you are standing before a court in your right, and the judge not being favorably disposed toward you. While on your way to the court you must repeat the benediction already given above.

TO STOP BLEEDING AT ANY TIME.

Write the name of the four principal waters of the whole world, flowing out of Paradise, on a paper, namely: Pison, Gihon, Hedekiel and Pheat, and put it on the wound. In the first book of Moses, the second chapter, verses 11, 12, 13, you will find them. You will find this effective.

ANOTHER WAY TO STOP BLOOD.

As soon as you cut yourself you must say: "Blessed wound, blessed hour, blessed be the day on which Jesus Christ was born, in the name + + + Amen.

ANOTHER SIMILAR PRESCRIPTION.

Breathe three times upon the patient, and say the Lord's Prayer three times until the words, "upon the earth," and the bleeding will be stopped.

ANOTHER STILL MORE CERTAIN WAY TO STOP BLEEDING.

If the bleeding will not stop, or if a vein has been cut, then lay the following on it, and it will stop that hour. Yet if any one does not believe this, let him write the letters upon a knife and stab an irrational animal, and he will not be able to draw blood. And whosoever carries this about him will be safe against all his enemies.

I. m. I. K. I. B. I. P. a. x. v. ss. Ss. vas,
I. P. O. unay Lit. Dom. mper vobism.

And whenever a woman is going to give birth to a child, or is otherwise afflicted, let her have this letter about her person; it will certainly be of avail.

A PECULIAR SIGN TO KEEP BACK MEN AND ANIMALS.

Whenever you are in danger of being attacked, then carry this sign with you: "In the name of God, I make the attack. May it please my Redeemer to assist me. Upon the holy assistance of God I depend entirely; upon the holy assistance of God and my gun I rely very truly. God alone be with us. Blessed be Jesus.

PROTECTION OF ONE'S HOUSE AND HEARTH,

Beneath thy guardianship I am safe against all tempests and all enemies, J. J. J. These three J's signify *Jesus* three times.

A CHARM TO BE CARRIED ABOUT THE PERSON.

Carry these words about you, and nothing can hit you: Ananiah, Azariah, and Misael, blessed be the Lord, for he has redeemed us from hell, and has saved us from death, and he has redeemed us out of the fiery furnace, and has preserved us even in the midst of the fire; in the same manner may it please him the Lord that there be no fire.

I.
N. I. R.
I.

TO CHARM ENEMIES, ROBBERS AND MURDERERS.

God be with you, brethren; stop, ye thieves, robbers, murderers, horsemen, and soldiers, in all humility, for we have tasted the rosy blood of Jesus. Your rifles and guns will be stopped up with the holy blood of Jesus; and all swords and arms are made harmless by the five holy wounds of Jesus.

There are three roses upon the heart of God; the first is beneficent, the other is omnipotent, the third is his holy will. You thieves must therefore stand under it, standing still as long as I will. In the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, you are conjured and made to stand.

A CHARM AGAINST FIRE-ARMS.

Jesus passed over the Red Sea, and looked upon the land; and thus must break all ropes and bands, and thus must break all manner of fire-arms, rifles, guns, or pistols, and all false tongues be silenced. May the benediction of God on creating the first man always be upon me; the benediction spoken by God, when he ordered in a dream that Joseph and Mary together with Jesus should flee into Egypt, be upon me always, and may the holy + be ever lovely and beloved in my right hand. I journey through the country at large where no one is robbed, killed or murdered — where no one can do me any injury, and where not even a dog could bite me, or any other animal tear me to pieces. In all things let me be protected, as also my flesh and blood, against sins and false tongues which reach from the earth up to heaven, by the power of the four Evangelists, in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Amen.

ANOTHER FOR THE SAME.

I (name) conjure ye guns, swords and knives, as well as all other kinds of arms, by the spear that pierced the side of God, and opened it so that blood and water could flow out, that ye do not injure me, a servant of God, in the + + +. I conjure ye, by Saint Stephen, who was stoned by the Virgin, that ye cannot injure me who am a servant of God, in the name of + + +. Amen.

PROTECTION AGAINST ALL KINDS OF WEAPONS.

Jesus, God and man, do thou protect me against all manner of guns, fire-arms, long or short, of any kind of metal. Keep thou thy fire, like the Virgin Mary, who kept her fire both before and after her birth. May Christ bind up all fire-arms after the manner of his having bound up himself in humility while in the flesh. Jesus, do thou render harmless all arms and weapons, like unto the husband of Mary the mother of God, he having been harmless likewise. Furthermore, do thou guard the three holy drops of blood which Christ sweated on the Mount of Olives. Jesus Christ! do thou protect me against being killed and against burning fires. Jesus, do thou not suffer me to be killed, much less to be damned, without having received the Lord's Supper. May God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, assist me in this. Amen.

A CHARM AGAINST SHOOTING, CUTTING OR THRUSTING.

In the name of J. J. J. Amen. I (*name*); Jesus Christ is the true salvation; Jesus Christ governs. reigns, defeats and conquers every enemy, visible or invisible; Jesus, be thou with me at all times, forever and ever, upon all roads and ways, upon the water and the land, on the mountain and in the valley, in the house and in the yard, in the whole world wherever I am, stand, run, ride or drive; whether I sleep or wake, eat or drink, there be thou also, Lord Jesus Christ, at all times, late and early, every hour, every moment; and in all my goings in or goings out. Those five holy red wounds, oh, Lord Jesus Christ, may they guard me against all fire-arms, be they secret or public, that they cannot injure me or do me any harm whatever, in the name of + + +. May Jesus Christ, with his guardianship and protection, shield me (*name*) always from daily commission of sins, worldly injuries and injustice, from contempt, from pestilence and other diseases, from fear, torture, and great suffering, from all evil intentions, from false tongues and old clatter-brains; and that no kind of fire-arms can inflict any injury to my body, do thou take care of me. + + +. And that no band of thieves nor Gypsies, highway robbers, incendiaries, witches and other evil spirits may secretly enter my house or premises, nor break in; may the dear Virgin Mary, and all children who are in heaven with God, in eternal joys, protect and guard me against them; and the glory of God the Father shall strengthen me, the wisdom of God the Son shall enlighten me, and the grace of God the Holy Ghost shall empower me from this hour unto all eternity. Amen.

TO CHARM GUNS AND OTHER ARMS.

The blessing which came from heaven at the birth of Christ be with me (*name*). The blessing of God at the creation of the first man be with me; the blessing of Christ on being imprisoned, bound, lashed, crowned so dreadfully, and beaten, and dying on the cross, be with me; the blessing which the Priest spoke over the tender, joyful corpse of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with me; the constancy of the Holy Mary and all the saints of God, of the three holy kings, Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, be with me; the holy four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, be with me; the Archangels St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. Raphael and St. Uriel, be with me; the twelve holy messengers of the Patriarchs and all the Hosts of Heaven, be with me; and the inexpressible number of all the Saints be with me. Amen.

*Papa, R. tarn, Tetregammate Angen.
Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Judeorum.*

TO PREVENT BEING CHEATED, CHARMED OR BEWITCHED, AND TO BE AT ALL TIMES BLESSED.

Like unto the cup and the wine, and the holy supper, which our dear Lord Jesus Christ gave unto his dear disciples on Maunday Thursday, may the Lord Jesus guard me in daytime, and at night, that no dog may bite me, no wild beast tear me to pieces, no tree fall on me, no water rise against me, no fire-arms injure me, no weapons, no steel, no iron, cut me, no fire burn me, no false sentence fall upon me, no false tongue injure me, no rogue enrage me, and that no fiends, no witchcraft and enchantment can harm me. Amen.

DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS TO EFFECT THE SAME.

The Holy Trinity guard me, and be and remain with me on the water and upon the land, in the water or in the fields, in cities or villages, in the whole world wherever I am. The Lord Jesus Christ protect me against all my enemies, secret or public; and may the Eternal Godhead also guard me through the bitter sufferings of Jesus Christ; his holy rosy blood, shed on the cross, assist me, J. J. Jesus has been crucified, tortured and died. These are true words, and in the same way must all words be efficacious which are here put down, and spoken in prayer by me. This shall assist me that I shall not be imprisoned, bound or overcome by anyone. Before me all guns or other weapons shall be of no use or power. Fire-arms, hold your fire in the almighty hand of God. This all fire-arms shall be charmed. + + + When the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ was fastened to the tree of the cross; like unto the Son of the Heavenly Father who was obedient unto death, may the Eternal Godhead protect me by the rosy blood, by the five holy wounds on the tree of the cross; and thus must I be blessed and well protected like the cup and the wine, and the genuine true bread, which Jesus Christ gave to his disciples on the evening of Maunday Thursday. J. J. J.

ANOTHER SIMILAR DIRECTION.

The grace of God and his benevolence be with me (N). I shall now ride or walk out; and I will gird about my loins with a sure ring. So it pleases God, the Heavenly Father, he will protect me, my flesh and blood, and all my

arteries and limbs, during this day and night which I have before me; and however numerous my enemies might be, they must be dumbstruck, and all become like a dead man, white as snow, so that no one will be able to shoot, cut or throw at me, or to overcome me, although he may hold rifle or steel against whosoever else evil weapons and arms might be called, in his hand. My rifle shall go off like the lightning from heaven, and my sword shall cut like a razor. Then went our dear lady Mary upon a very high mountain; she looked down into a very dusky valley and beheld her dear child standing amidst the Jews, harsh, very harsh, because he was bound so harsh, because he was bound so hard; and therefore may the dear Lord Jesus Christ save me from all that is injurious to me. + + + Amen.

ANOTHER SIMILAR DIRECTION.

There walk out during this day and night, that thou mayest not let any of my enemies, or thieves, approach me, if they do not intend to bring me what was spent from the holy altar. Because God the Lord Jesus Christ is ascended into heaven in his living body. O Lord, this is good for me this day and night. + + + Amen.

ANOTHER ONE LIKE IT.

In the name of God I walk out. God the Father be with me, and God the Holy Ghost be by my side. Whoever is stronger than these three persons may approach my body and my life; yet whoso is not stronger than these three would much better let me be. J. J. J.

ANOTHER ONE LIKE IT.

I conjure thee, sword, sabre or knife, that mightest injure or harm me, by the priest of all prayers, who had gone into the temple at Jerusalem, and said: An edged sword shall pierce your soul that you may not injure me, who am a child of God.

A VERY EFFECTIVE CHARM.

I (*name*) conjure thee, sword or knife, as well as all other weapons, by that spear which pierced Jesus' side, and opened it to the gushing out of blood and water, that he keep me from injury as one of the servants of God.
+ + + Amen.

A VERY SAFE AND RELIABLE CHARM.

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with me [*name*]. Oh shot, stand still! in the name of the mighty prophets Agtion and Elias, and do not kill me! oh shot, stop short. I conjure you by heaven and earth, and by the last judgment, that you do no harm unto me, a child of God. + + +

A GOOD CHARM AGAINST THIEVES.

There are three lilies standing upon the grave of the Lord our God; the first one is the courage of God, the other is the blood of God, and the third one is the will of God. Stand still, thief! No more than Jesus Christ stepped down from the cross, no more shalt thou move from this spot; this I command thee by the four evangelists and elements of heaven, there in the river, or in the shot, or in the judgment, or in the sight. Thus I conjure you by the last judgment to stand still and not to move, until I see all the stars in heaven and the sun rises again. Thus I stop by running and jumping and command it in the name of + + +. Amen. This must be repeated three times.

HOW TO RECOVER STOLEN GOODS.

Take good care to notice through which door the thief passed out, and cut off three small chips from the posts of that door; then take these three chips to a wagon, unbeshrewdly, however; take off one of the wheels and put the three chips into the stock of the wheel, in the three highest names, then turn the wheel backwards and say: Thief, thief, thief! Turn back with the stolen goods; thou art forced to do it by the Almighty power of God: + + + God the Father calls thee back, God the Son turns thee back so that thou must return, and God the Holy Ghost leads thee back, until thou arrive at the place from which thou hast stolen. By the almight power of God the Father thou must come; by the wisdom of God the Son thou hast neither peace nor quiet until thou hast returned the stolen goods to their former

place; by the grace of God the Holy Ghost thou must run and jump and canst find no peace or rest until thou arrivest at the place from which thou hast stolen. God the Father binds thee, God the Son forces thee, and God the Holy Ghost turns thee back. (You must not turn the wheel too fast.) Thief, thou must come, + + + thief, thou must come, + + + thief, thou must come, + + +. If thou art more almighty, thief, thief, thief; if thou art more almighty than God himself, then you may remain where you are. The ten commandments force thee — thou shalt not steal, and therefore thou must come. + + + Amen.

A WELL-TRIED CHARM.

Three holy drops of blood have passed down the holy cheeks of the Lord God, and these three holy drops of blood are placed before the touchhole. As surely as our dear lady was pure from all men, as surely shall no fire or smoke pass out of this barrel. Barrel, do thou give neither fire, nor flame, nor heat. Now I will walk out, because the Lord God goeth before me; God the Son is with me, and God the Holy Ghost is about me forever.

ANOTHER WELL-TRIED CHARM AGAINST FIRE-ARMS.

Blessed is the hour in which Jesus Christ was born;
blessed is the hour in which Jesus Christ was born;
blessed is the hour in which Jesus Christ was born;
blessed is the hour in which Jesus Christ has arisen from the dead;
blessed are these three hours over thy gun, that no shot or ball shall fly toward me, and neither my skin, nor my hair, nor my blood, nor my flesh be injured by them, and that no kind of weapon or metal shall do me any harm, so surely as the Mother of God shall not bring forth another son. + + +. Amen.

A CHARM TO GAIN ADVANTAGE OF A MAN OF SUPERIOR STRENGTH.

I [*name*] breathe upon thee. Three drops of blood I take from thee: the first out of thy heart, the other out of thy liver, and the third out of thy vital powers: and in this I deprive thee of thy strength and manliness.

Hbbi Massa danti Lantien. I. I. I.

A RECIPE FOR DESTROYING SPRING-TAILS OR GROUND-FLEAS.

Take the chaff upon which children have been lying in their cradles, or take the dung of horses, and put that upon the field, and the spring-tails or ground-fleas{sic} will no longer do you any injury.

A BENEDICTION FOR AND AGAINST ALL ENEMIES.

The cross of Christ be with me; the cross of Christ overcomes all water and every fire; the cross of Christ overcomes all weapons; the cross of Christ is a perfect sign and blessing to my soul. May Christ be with me and my body during all my life at day and at night. Now I pray, I, [name], pray God the Father for the soul's sake, and I pray God the Son for the Father's sake, and I pray God the Holy Ghost for the Father's and the Son's sake, that the holy corpse of God may bless me against all evil things, words and works. The cross of Christ open unto me future bliss; the cross of Christ be with me, above me, before me, behind me, beneath me, aside of me and everywhere, and before all my enemies, visible and invisible; these all flee from me as soon as they but know or hear. Enoch and Elias, the two prophets, were never imprisoned, nor bound, nor beaten and came never out of their power; thus no one of my enemies must be able to injure or attack me in my body or my life, in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

A BENEDICTION AGAINST ENEMIES, SICKNESS AND MISFORTUNE.

The blessing which came from heaven, from God the Father, when the true living Son was born, be with me at all times; the blessing which God spoke over the whole human race, be with me always. The holy cross of God, as long and as broad as the one upon which God suffered his blessed, bitter tortures, bless me to-day and forever. The three holy nails which were driven through the holy hands and feet of Jesus Christ shall bless me to-day and forever. The bitter crown of thorns which was forced upon the holy head of Christ, shall bless me to-day and forever. The spear by which the holy side of Jesus was opened, shall bless me to-day and forever. The rosy blood protect me from all my enemies, and from everything which might be injurious to my body or soul, or my worldly goods. Bless me, oh ye five holy

wounds, in order that all my enemies may be driven away and bound, while God has encompassed all Christendom. In this shall assist me God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen. Thus must I [N.] be blessed as well and as valid as the cup and the wine, and the true, living bread which Jesus gave his disciples on the evening of Maunday Thursday. All those that hate you must be silent before me; their hearts are dead in regard to me; and their tongues are mute, so that they are not at all able to inflict the least injury upon me, or my house, or my premises: And likewise, all those who intend attacking and wounding me with their arms and weapons shall be defenceless, weak and conquered before me. In this shall assist me the holy power of God, which can make all arms or weapons of no avail. All this in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

THE TALISMAN.

It is said that anyone going out hunting and carrying it in his game-bag, cannot but shoot something worth while and bring it home. An old hermit once found an old, lame huntsman in a forest, lying beside the road and weeping. The hermit asked him the cause of his dejection. "Ah me, thou man of God, I am a poor, unfortunate being; I must annually furnish my lord with as many deer, and hares, and partridges, as a young and healthy huntsman could hunt up, or else I will be discharged from my office; now I am old and lame; besides game is getting scarce, and I cannot follow it up as I ought to; and I know not what will become of me." Here the old man's feelings overcame him, and he could not utter another word. The hermit, upon this, took out a small piece of paper, upon which he wrote some words with a pencil, and handing it to the huntsman, he said: "there, old friend, put this in your game-bag whenever you go out hunting, and you shall certainly shoot something worth while, and bring it home, too; yet be careful to shoot no more than you necessarily need, nor to communicate it to anyone that might misuse it, on account of the high meaning contained in these words." The hermit then went on his journey, and after a little the huntsman also arose, and without thinking of anything in particular he went into the woods, and had scarcely advanced a hundred yards when he shot as fine a roebuck as he ever saw in his life.

This huntsman was afterward and during his whole lifetime lucky in his hunting, so much so that he was considered one of the best hunters in that whole country. The following is what the hermit wrote on the paper:\

Ut nemo in sense tentat, descendre nemo.
At precedenti spectatur mantica tergo.

The best argument is to try it.

TO PREVENT ANYONE FROM KILLING GAME.

Pronounce the name, as for instance, *Jacob Wohlgemuth*, shoot whatever you please; shoot but hair and feathers with and what you give to poor people. + + + Amen.

TO COMPEL A THIEF TO RETURN STOLEN GOODS.

Walk out early in the morning before sunrise, to a juniper-tree, and bend it with the left hand toward the rising sun, while you are saying: Juniper-tree, I shall bend and squeeze thee, until the thief has returned the stolen goods to the place from which he took them. Then you must take a stone and put it on the bush, and under the bush and the stone you must place the skull of a malefactor. + + + Yet you must be careful, in case the thief returns the stolen goods, to unloose the bush and replace the stone where it was before.

A CHARM AGAINST POWDER AND BALL.

The heavenly and holy trumpet blow every ball and misfortune away from me. I seek refuge beneath the tree of life which bears twelvefold fruits. I stand behind the holy altar of the Christian Church. I commend myself to the Holy Trinity. I [*name*] hide myself beneath the holy corpse of Jesus Christ. I commend myself unto the wounds of Jesus Christ, that the hand of no man might be able to seize me, or to bind me, or to cut me, or to throw me, or to beat me, or to overcome me in any way whatever, so help me. [N.] —> Whoever carries this book with him is safe from all his enemies, visible or invisible; and whoever has this book with him cannot die without the holy corpse of Jesus Christ, nor drown in any water, nor burn up in any fire, nor can any unjust sentence be passed upon him. So help me + + +

UNLUCKY DAYS, TO BE FOUND IN EACH MONTH.

January 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 11, 12.

February 1, 17, 18.

March 14, 16.

April 10, 17, 18.

May 7, 8.

June 17.

July 17, 21.

August 20, 21.

September 10, 18.

October 6.

November 6, 10.

December 6, 11, 15.

Whoever is born upon one of these days is unfortunate and suffers much poverty; and whoever takes sick on one of these days seldom recovers health; and those who engage or marry on these days become very poor and miserable. Neither is it advisable to move from one house to another, nor to travel, nor to bargain, nor to engage in a lawsuit, on one of these days.

The Signs of the Zodiac must be observed by the course of the moon, as they are daily given in common almanacs.

If a cow calves in the sign of the Virgin, the calf will not live one year; if it happens in the Scorpion, it will die much sooner; therefore no one should be weaned off in these signs, nor in the sign of the Capricorn or Aquarius, and they will be in less danger from mortal inflammation.

This is the only piece extracted from a centennial almanac imported from Germany, and there are many who believe in it. HOHMAN.

MORNING PRAYER WHICH IS TO BE SPOKEN BEFORE ENTERING UPON A JOURNEY. IT PROTECTS AGAINST ALL MANNER OF BAD LUCK.

Oh, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, yea, a King over the whole world, protect me [/name/] during this day and night, protect me at all times by thy five holy wounds, that I may not be seized and bound. The Holy Trinity guard me, that no gun, fire-arm, ball or lead, shall touch my

body; and that they shall be weak like the tears and bloody sweat of Jesus Christ, in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

TO SUFFERING HUMANITY.

We ourselves know of many unfortunate beings who are afflicted with epilepsy, yet how many more may be in the country who have perhaps already spent their fortunes in seeking aid in this disease, without gaining relief. We have now been informed of a remedy which is said to be infallible, and which has been adopted by the most distinguished physicians in Europe, and has so well stood the test of repeated trials that it is now generally applied in Europe. It directs a bedroom for the sick person to be fitted up over the cow-stable, where the patient must sleep at night, and should spend the greater part of his time during the day in it. This is easily done by building a regular room over the stable. Then care is to be taken to leave an opening in the ceiling of the stable, in such a manner that the evaporation from the same can pass into the room, while, at the same time, the cow may inhale the perspiration of the sick person. In this way the animal will gradually attract the whole disease, and be affected with arthritic attacks, and when the patient has entirely lost them the cow will fall dead to the ground. The stable must not be cleaned during the operation, though fresh straw or hay may be put in; and of course, the milk of the cow, so long as she gives any, must be thrown away as useless.

A SALVE TO HEAL UP WOUNDS.

Take tobacco, green or dry; if green a good handful, if dry, two ounces; together with this take a good handful of elder leaves, fry them well in butter, press it through a cloth, and you may use it in a salve. This will heal up a wound in a short time. Or go to a white oak tree that stands pretty well isolated, and scrape off the rough bark from the eastern side of the tree; then cut off the inner bark, break it into small pieces, and boil it until all the strength is drawn out; strain it through a piece of linen, and boil it again, until it becomes as thick as tar; then take out as much as you need, and put to it an equal proportion of sheep-tallow, rosin and wax, and work them together until they form a salve. This salve you put on a piece of linen, very thinly spread, and lay it on the wound, renewing it occasionally till the wound is healed up. Or take a handful of parsley, pound it fine, and work it to a salve with an equal proportion of fresh butter. This salve prevents mortification and heals very fast.

PEACHES.

The flowers of the peach-tree, prepared like salad, opens the bowels, and is of use in the dropsy. Six or seven peeled kernels of the peach-stone, eaten daily, will ease the gravel; they are also said to prevent drunkenness, when eaten before meals. Whoever loses his hair should pound up peach kernels, mix them with vinegar, and put them on the bald place. The water distilled from peach flowers opens the bowels of infants and destroys their worms.

SWEET OIL.

Sweet oil possesses a great many valuable properties, and it is therefore advisable for every head of a family to have it at all times about the house in order that it may be applied in cases of necessity. Here follow some of its chief virtues: It is a sure remedy, internally as well as externally, in all cases of inflammation in men and animals. Internally, it is given to allay the burning in the stomach caused by strong drink or by purging too severely, or by poisonous medicines. Even if pure poison has been swallowed, vomiting may be easily produced by one or two wine-glasses of sweet oil, and thus the poison will be carried off, provided it has not already been too long in the bowels; and after the vomiting, a spoonful of the oil should be taken every hour until the burning caused by the poison is entirely allayed. Whoever is bitten by a snake, or any other poisonous animal, or by a mad dog, and immediately takes warmed sweet oil, and washes the wound with it, and then puts a rag, three or four times doubled up and well soaked with oil, on the wound every three or four hours, and drinks a couple of spoonfuls of the oil every four hours for some days, will surely find out what peculiar virtues the sweet oil possesses in regard to poisons.

In dysentery, sweet oil is likewise a very useful remedy, when the stomach has first been cleansed with rhubarb or some other suitable purgative, and then a few spoonfuls of sweet oil should be taken every three hours. For this purpose, however, the sweet oil should have been well boiled and a little hartshorn be mixed with it. This boiled sweet oil is also serviceable in all sorts of bowel complaints and in colics; or when anyone receives internal injury as from a fall, a few spoonfuls of it should be taken every two hours; for it allays the pain, scatters the coagulated blood, prevents all inflammation and heals gently.

Externally, it is applicable in all manner of swellings; it softens, allays the pain, and prevents inflammation.

Sweet oil and white lead, ground together, makes a very good salve, which is applicable in burns and scalds. This salve is also excellent against

infection from poisonous weeds or waters, if it is put on the infected part as soon as it is noticed.

If sweet oil is put in a large glass, so as to fill it about one-half full, and the glass is then filled up with the flowers of the St. Johnswort, and well covered and placed in the sun for about four weeks, the oil proves then, when distilled, such a valuable remedy for all fresh wounds in men and animals, that no one can imagine its medicinal powers who has not tried it. This should at all times be found in a well-conducted household. In a similar manner, an oil may be made of white lilies, which is likewise very useful to soften hardened swellings and burns, and to cure the sore breasts of women.

CURE FOR DROPSY.

Dropsy is a disease derived from a cold humidity, which passes through the different limbs to such a degree that it either swells the whole or a portion of them. The usual symptoms and precursors of every case of dropsy are the swelling of the feet and thighs, and then of the face; besides this the change of the natural color of the flesh into a dull white, with great thirst, loss of appetite, costiveness, sweating, throwing up of slimy substances, but little water, laziness and aversion to exercise. Physicians know three different kinds of dropsy, which they name:

1. *Anasarca*, when the water penetrates between the skin and the flesh over the whole body, and all the limbs, and even about the face and swells them.

2. *Ascites*, when the belly and thighs swell, while the upper extremities dry up.

3. *Tympanites*, caused rather by wind than water. The belly swells up very hard, the navel is forced out very far, and the other members fall away. The belly becomes so much inflated that knocking against it causes a sound like that of a large drum, and from this circumstance its name is derived. The chief thing in curing dropsy rests upon three points, namely:

1. To reduce the hardness of the swelling which may be in the bowels or other parts.

2. To endeavor to scatter the humors.

3. To endeavor to pass them off either through the stool or through the water.

The best cure therefore must chiefly consist in this: To avoid as much as possible all drinking, and use only dry victuals; to take moderate exercise, and to sweat and purge the body considerably. If anyone feels symptoms of dropsy, or while it is yet in its first stages, let him make free use of the sugar of the herb called *Fumatory*, as this purifies the blood, and the *Euphrasy* sugar to open the bowels.

A CURE FOR DROPSY (SAID TO BE INFALLIBLE).

Take a jug of stone or earthenware, and put four quarts of strong, healthy cider into it; take two handfuls of parsley roots and tops, cut it fine; a handful of scraped horse-radish, two tablespoonfuls of bruised mustard-seed, half an ounce of squills, and half an ounce of juniper berries; put all these in the jug, and place it near the fire for 24 hours so as to keep the cider warm, and shake it up often; then strain it through a cloth and keep it for use. To a grown person give half a wineglassful three times a day, on an empty stomach. But if necessary you may increase the dose, although it must decrease again as soon as the water is carried off, and, as stated before, use dry victuals and exercise gently.

This remedy has cured a great many persons, and among them a woman of 70 years of age, who had the dropsy so badly that she was afraid to get out of bed, for fear her skin might burst, and who it was thought could not live but a few days. She used this remedy according to the directions given, and in less than a week the water had passed off her, the swelling of her stomach fell, and in a few weeks afterward she again enjoyed perfect health.

Or: Drink for a few days very strong Bohea tea, and eat the leaves of it. This simple means is said to have carried away the water from some persons in three or four days, and freed them from the swelling, although this disease had reached the highest pitch.

Or: Take three spoonfuls of rape-seed, and half an ounce of clean gum myrrh, put these together in a quart of good old wine, and let it stand over night in the room, keeping it well covered. Aged persons are to take two teaspoonfuls of this an hour after supper, and the same before going to bed; younger persons must diminish the quantity according to their age, and continue the use of it as long as necessary.

Or: Take young branches of spruce pine, cut them into small pieces, pour water on them and let them boil a while, then pour it into a large tub, take off your clothes, and sit down over it, covering yourself and the tub with a sheet or blanket, to prevent the vapor from escaping. When the water begins to cool let some one put in hot bricks; and when you have thus been sweating for a while, wrap the sheet or blanket close around you and go to bed with it. A repetition of this for several days will free the system from all water.

CURE FOR DROPSY.

Take of the broom-corn seed, well powdered and sifted, one drachm. Let it steep twelve hours in a wineglass and a half of good, rich wine, and take it in the morning fasting, having first shaken it so that the whole may be

swallowed. Let the patient walk after it, if able, or let him use what exercise he can without fatigue, for an hour and a half; after which let him take two ounces of olive oil, and not eat or drink anything in less than half an hour afterward. Let this be repeated every day, or once in three days, and not oftener, till a cure is effected, and do not let blood, or use any other remedy during the course.

Nothing can be more gentle and safe than the operation of this remedy. If the dropsy is in the body it discharges it by water, without any inconvenience; if it is between the skin and flesh, it causes blisters to rise on the legs, by which it will run off; but this does not happen to more than one in thirty: and in this case no plasters must be used, but apply red-cabbage leaves. It cures dropsy in pregnant women, without injury to the mother or child. It also alleviates asthma, consumption and disorders of the liver.

REMEDY FOR THE LOCK JAW.

We are informed by a friend that a sure preventive against this terrible disease, is, to take some soft soap and mix it with a sufficient quantity of pulverized chalk, so as to make it of the consistency of buckwheat batter; keep the chalk moistened with a fresh supply of soap until the wound begins to discharge, and the patient finds relief. Our friend stated to us that explicit confidence may be placed in what he says, that he has known several cases where this remedy has been successfully applied. So simple and valuable a remedy, within the reach of everyone, ought to be generally known. — *N.Y. Evening Post*.

FOR THE STING OF A WASP OR BEE.

A Liverpool paper states as follows: "A few days ago, happening to be in the country, we witnessed the efficacy of the remedy for the sting of a wasp mentioned in one of our late papers. A little boy was stung severely and was in great torture, until an onion was applied to the part affected, when the cure was instantaneous. This important and simple remedy cannot be too generally known, and we pledge ourselves to the facts above stated."

DIARRHOEA MIXTURE.

Take one ounce tinct. rhubarb, one ounce laudanum, one ounce tinct. Cayenne pepper, one ounce spirits of camphor. Dose, from ten to thirty drops for an adult.

SOAP POWDERS.

Take one pound of hard soap, cut it fine, and mix with it one pound of soda ash. This article is much used, and its preparation, we believe, is a "great secret."

TO DYE A MADDER RED.

For each pound of cloth, soak half a pound of madder in a brass kettle over night, with sufficient warm water to cover the cloth you intend to dye. Next morning put in two ounces of madder compound for every pound of madder. Wet your cloth and wring it out in clean water, then put it into the dye. Place the kettle over the fire, and bring it slowly to a scalding heat, which will take about half an hour; keep at this heat half an hour, if a light red is wanted, and longer if a dark one, the color depending on the time it remains in the dye. When you have obtained the color, rinse the cloth immediately in cold water.

TO DYE A FINE SCARLET RED.

Bring to a boiling heat, in a brass kettle, sufficient soft water to cover the cloth you wish to dye; then add 1 1/2 oz. cream of tartar for every pound of cloth. Boil a minute or two, add two oz. lac dye and one oz. madder compound (both previously mixed in an earthen bowl), boil five minutes; now wet the cloth in warm water and wring it out and put in into the dye; boil the whole nearly an hour, take the cloth out and rinse it in clear cold water.

TO DYE A PERMANENT BLUE.

Boil the cloth in a brass kettle for an hour, in a solution containing five parts of alum and three of tartar for every 32 parts of cloth. It is then to be thrown into warm water, previously mixed with a greater or less proportion of chemic blue, according to the shade the cloth is intended to receive. In this water it must be boiled until it has acquired the desired color.

TO DYE A GREEN.

For every pound of cloth add 3 1/2 oz. of alum and one pound of fustic. Steep (not boil) till the strength is out; soak the cloth till it acquires a good yellow, then remove the chips, and add the chemic blue by degrees till you have the desired color.

PHYSIC BALL FOR HORSES.

Cape aloes, from six to ten drachms; Castile soap, one drachm; spirits of wine, one drachm; syrup to form the ball. If mercurial physic be wanted, add from one-half a drachm to one drachm of calomel.

Previous to physicking a horse, and during its operation, he should be fed on bran mashes, allowed plenty of chilled water, and have exercise. Physic is always useful; it is necessary to be administered in almost every disease; it improves digestion, and gives strength to the lacteals by cleansing the intestines and unloading the liver; and if the animal is afterward properly fed, will improve his strength and condition in a remarkable degree. Physic, except in urgent cases, should be given in the morning and on an empty stomach, and, if required to be repeated, a week should intervene between each dose.

Before giving a horse a ball, see that it is not too hard nor too large. Cattle medicine is always given as a drench.

PHYSIC FOR CATTLE.

Cape aloes, four drachms to one oz.; Epsom salts, four to six oz.; powdered ginger, three drachms. Mix and give in a quart of gruel. For calves, one-third of this will be a dose.

SEDATIVE AND WORM BALL.

Powdered white hellebore, one-half drachm; linseed powder, one-half oz. If necessary, make into a ball with molasses. This ball is a specific for weed. Two ounces of gargling oil, in one-half bottle of linseed oil, is an effectual remedy for worms in horses and cattle.

ASTRINGENT BALL FOR LOOSENESS IN HORSES.

Opium from one-half to one drachm; ginger, one and a half drachms; prepared chalk, three drachms; flour, two drachms. Powder, and make into a ball with molasses.

MIXTURE FOR ULCERS AND ALL FOUL SORES.

Sulphate of zinc, one oz.; corrosive sublimate, one drachm; spirit of salt, four drachms; water, one pint; mix.

YELLOW WATER IN HORSES.

Take Venetian soap, juniper oil, saltpetre, sal prunella, sweet spirits of nitre, of each one ounce; make it into a ball with pulverized licorice root, and give the horse two ounces at once, and repeat if necessary. If attended with a violent fever, bleed, and give bran mash; or, Take a gallon of strong beer, or ale, add thereto two ounces of Castile soap and one ounce of saltpetre; stir, and mix daily of this with his feed.

The following is also highly recommended in a German work: Take pulverized gentian and calamus, of each one-half ounce; sulphate of potassa, two ounces; tartar emetic, liver of sulphur, and oil of turpentine, one-eighth of an ounce each; mix it with flour and water, and give the above in the incipient stage of the disease. The dose, if necessary, may be given daily for several days.

A VALUABLE RECIPE FOR GALLS — WINDGALLS IN HORSES.

An intelligent and experienced farmer, rising of seventy years of age, residing in Allen township, Cumberland county, has assured us that the following ointment, if applied two or three times a day, will cure the most obstinate windgalls. Take one pound of the leaves of stramonium (Jamestown weed) bruised; two pounds of fresh butter or hog's lard, and one gill of the spirits of turpentine; put the whole of the ingredients into a

clean earthen crock and place it with the contents over live coals for twenty or thirty minutes, stirring it occasionally: then strain it through a coarse cloth or canvas, and it forms a consistent ointment, with which anoint the windgalls two or three times a day.

Fifty dollars had been offered for the above recipe, so says our informant, who kindly furnished it.

WIND-BROKEN HORSES.

The excellent ball for broken-winded horses, that has made a perfect cure of over seven hundred in less than nine months, after many other medicines being tried in vain. Take myrrh, elecampane, and licorice root, in fine powder, three ounces each; saffron, three drachms: assafoetida, one ounce; sulphur squills and cinnabar of antimony, of each two ounces; aurum mosaicum, one ounce and a half; oil of aniseed, eighty drops. You may make it into paste with either treacle or honey, and give the horse the quantity of a hen's egg every morning for a week; and afterwards every other morning till the disorder is removed.



Part Five

**THE FOLK-LORE
OF PLANTS**

BY

T.F. THISELTON-DYER

Original Publication, 1889

Reproduced Here in It's Entirety



PREFACE.

Apart from botanical science, there is perhaps no subject of inquiry connected with plants of wider interest than that suggested by the study of folk-lore. This field of research has been largely worked of late years, and has obtained considerable popularity in this country, and on the Continent.

Much has already been written on the folk-lore of plants, a fact which has induced me to give, in the present volume, a brief systematic summary--with a few illustrations in each case--of the many branches into which the subject naturally subdivides itself. It is hoped, therefore, that this little work will serve as a useful handbook for those desirous of gaining some information, in a brief concise form, of the folk-lore which, in one form or another, has clustered round the vegetable kingdom.

T.F. THISELTON-DYER.

November 19, 1888.



CONTENTS.

I. PLANT LIFE

II. PRIMITIVE AND SAVAGE NOTIONS RESPECTING PLANTS

III. PLANT WORSHIP

IV. LIGHTNING PLANTS

V. PLANTS IN WITCHCRAFT

VI. PLANTS IN DEMONOLOGY

VII. PLANTS IN FAIRY-LORE

VIII. LOVE-CHARMS

IX. DREAM-PLANTS

X. PLANTS AND THE WEATHER

XI. PLANT PROVERBS

XII. PLANTS AND THEIR CEREMONIAL USE

XIII. PLANT NAMES

XIV. PLANT LANGUAGE

XV. FABULOUS PLANTS

XVI. DOCTRINE OF SIGNATURES

XVII. PLANTS AND THE CALENDAR

XVIII. CHILDREN'S RHYMES AND GAMES

XIX. SACRED PLANTS

XX. PLANT SUPERSTITIONS

XXI. PLANTS IN FOLK-MEDICINE

XXII. PLANTS AND THEIR LEGENDARY HISTORY

XXIII. MYSTIC PLANTS

CHAPTER I.

PLANT LIFE.

The fact that plants, in common with man and the lower animals, possess the phenomena of life and death, naturally suggested in primitive times the notion of their having a similar kind of existence. In both cases there is a gradual development which is only reached by certain progressive stages of growth, a circumstance which was not without its practical lessons to the early naturalist. This similarity, too, was held all the more striking when it was observed how the life of plants, like that of the higher organisms, was subject to disease, accident, and other hostile influences, and so liable at any moment to be cut off by an untimely end.[1] On this account a personality was ascribed to the products of the vegetable kingdom, survivals of which are still of frequent occurrence at the present day. It was partly this conception which invested trees with that mystic or sacred character whereby they were regarded with a superstitious fear which found expression in sundry acts of sacrifice and worship. According to Mr. Tylor,[2] there is reason to believe that, "the doctrine of the spirits of plants lay deep in the intellectual history of South-east Asia, but was in great measure superseded under Buddhist influence. The Buddhist books show that in the early days of their religion it was matter of controversy whether trees had souls, and therefore whether they might lawfully be injured. Orthodox Buddhism decided against the tree souls, and consequently against the scruple to harm them, declaring trees to have no mind nor sentient principle, though admitting that certain dewas or spirits do reside in the body of trees, and speak from within them." Anyhow, the notion of its being wrong to injure or mutilate a tree for fear of putting it to unnecessary pain was a widespread belief. Thus, the Ojibways imagined that trees had souls, and seldom cut them down, thinking that if they did so they would hear "the wailing of the trees when they suffered in this way." [3] In Sumatra[4] certain trees have special honours paid to them as being the embodiment of the spirits of the woods, and the Fijians[5] believe that "if an animal or a plant die, its soul immediately goes to Bolotoo." The Dayaks of Borneo[6] assert that rice has a living principle or spirit, and hold feasts to retain its soul lest the crops should decay. And the Karens affirm,[7] too, that plants as well as men and animals have their "la" or spirit. The Iroquois acknowledge the existence of spirits in trees and plants, and say that the spirit of corn, the spirit of beans, and the spirit of squashes are supposed to have the forms of three beautiful maidens.

According to a tradition current among the Miamis, one year when there was an unusual abundance of corn, the spirit of the corn was very angry

because the children had thrown corn-cobs at each other in play, pretending to have suffered serious bodily injury in consequence of their sport[8]. Similarly, when the wind blows the long grass or waving corn, the German peasant will say, "the Grass-wolf," or "the Corn-wolf" is abroad. According to Mr. Ralston, in some places, "the last sheaf of rye is left as a shelter to the Roggenwolf or Rye-wolf during the winter's cold, and in many a summer or autumn festive rite that being is represented by a rustic, who assumes a wolf-like appearance. The corn spirit was, however, often symbolised under a human form."

Indeed, under a variety of forms this animistic conception is found among the lower races, and in certain cases explains the strong prejudice to certain herbs as articles of food. The Society Islanders ascribed a "varua" or surviving soul to plants, and the negroes of Congo adored a sacred tree called "Mirrone," one being generally planted near the house, as if it were the tutelar god of the dwelling. It is customary, also, to place calabashes of palm wine at the feet of these trees, in case they should be thirsty. In modern folk-lore there are many curious survivals of this tree-soul doctrine. In Westphalia,[9] the peasantry announce formally to the nearest oak any death that may have occurred in the family, and occasionally this formula is employed--"The master is dead, the master is dead." Even recently, writes Sir John Lubbock[10], an oak copse at Loch Siant, in the Isle of Skye, was held so sacred that no persons would venture to cut the smallest branch from it. The Wallachians, "have a superstition that every flower has a soul, and that the water-lily is the sinless and scentless flower of the lake, which blossoms at the gates of Paradise to judge the rest, and that she will inquire strictly what they have done with their odours." [11] It is noteworthy, also, that the Indian belief which describes the holes in trees as doors through which the special spirits of those trees pass, reappears in the German superstition that the holes in the oak are the pathways for elves; [12] and that various diseases may be cured by contact with these holes. Hence some trees are regarded with special veneration--particularly the lime and pine [13]--and persons of a superstitious turn of mind, "may often be seen carrying sickly children to a forest for the purpose of dragging them through such holes." This practice formerly prevailed in our own country, a well-known illustration of which we may quote from White's "History of Selborne:"

"In a farmyard near the middle of the village," he writes, "stands at this day a row of pollard ashes, which by the seams and long cicatrices down their sides, manifestly show that in former times they had been cleft asunder. These trees, when young and flexible, were severed and held open by wedges, while ruptured children, stripped naked, were pushed through the apertures." [14]

In Somersetshire the superstition still lingers on, and in Cornwall the ceremony to be of value must be performed before sunrise; but the practice

does not seem to have been confined to any special locality. It should also be added, as Mr. Conway[15] has pointed out, that in all Saxon countries in the Middle Ages a hole formed by two branches of a tree growing together was esteemed of highly efficacious value.

On the other hand, we must not confound the spiritual vitality ascribed to trees with the animistic conception of their being inhabited by certain spirits, although, as Mr. Tylor[16] remarks, it is difficult at times to distinguish between the two notions. Instances of these tree spirits lie thickly scattered throughout the folk-lore of most countries, survivals of which remain even amongst cultured races. It is interesting, moreover, to trace the same idea in Greek and Roman mythology. Thus Ovid[17] tells a beautiful story of Erisichthon's impious attack on the grove of Ceres, and it may be remembered how the Greek dryads and hamadryads had their life linked to a tree, and, "as this withers and dies, they themselves fall away and cease to be; any injury to bough or twig is felt as a wound, and a wholesale hewing down puts an end to them at once--a cry of anguish escapes them when the cruel axe comes near."

In "Apollonius Rhodius" we find one of these hamadryads imploring a woodman to spare a tree to which her existence is attached:

*"Loud through the air resounds the woodman's stroke,
When, lo! a voice breaks from the groaning oak,
'Spare, spare my life! a trembling virgin spare!
Oh, listen to the Hamadryad's prayer!
No longer let that fearful axe resound;
Preserve the tree to which my life is bound.
See, from the bark my blood in torrents flows;
I faint, I sink, I perish from your blows.'"*

Aubrey, referring to this old superstition, says:

"I cannot omit taking notice of the great misfortune in the family of the Earl of Winchelsea, who at Eastwell, in Kent, felled down a most curious grove of oaks, near his own noble seat, and gave the first blow with his own hands. Shortly after his countess died in her bed suddenly, and his eldest son, the Lord Maidstone, was killed at sea by a cannon bullet."

Modern European folk-lore still provides us with a curious variety of these spirit-haunted trees, and hence when the alder is hewn, "it bleeds, weeps, and begins to speak.[18]" An old tree in the Rugaard forest must not be felled for an elf dwells within, and another, on the Heinzenberg, near Zell, "uttered a complaint when the woodman cut it down, for in it was our Lady, whose chapel now stands upon the spot." [19]

An Austrian Märchen tells of a stately fir, in which there sits a fairy maiden waited on by dwarfs, rewarding the innocent and plaguing the guilty; and there is the German song of the maiden in the pine, whose bark

the boy splits with a gold and silver horn. Stories again are circulated in Sweden, among the peasantry, of persons who by cutting a branch from a habitation tree have been struck with death. Such a tree was the "klinta tall" in Westmanland, under which a mermaid was said to dwell. To this tree might occasionally be seen snow-white cattle driven up from the neighbouring lake across the meadows. Another Swedish legend tells us how, when a man was on the point of cutting down a juniper tree in a wood, a voice was heard from the ground, saying, "friend, hew me not." But he gave another stroke, when to his horror blood gushed from the root[20]. Then there is the Danish tradition[21] relating to the lonely thorn, occasionally seen in a field, but which never grows larger. Trees of this kind are always bewitched, and care should be taken not to approach them in the night time, "as there comes a fiery wheel forth from the bush, which, if a person cannot escape from, will destroy him."

In modern Greece certain trees have their "stichios," a being which has been described as a spectre, a wandering soul, a vague phantom, sometimes invisible, at others assuming the most widely varied forms. It is further added that when a tree is "stichimonious" it is dangerous for a man, "to sleep beneath its shade, and the woodcutters employed to cut it down will lie upon the ground and hide themselves, motionless, and holding their breath, at the moment when it is about to fall, dreading lest the stichio at whose life the blow is aimed with each stroke of the axe, should avenge itself at the precise moment when it is dislodged." [22]

Turning to primitive ideas on this subject, Mr. Schoolcraft mentions an Indian tradition of a hollow tree, from the recesses of which there issued on a calm day a sound like the voice of a spirit. Hence it was considered to be the residence of some powerful spirit, and was accordingly deemed sacred. Among rude tribes trees of this kind are held sacred, it being forbidden to cut them. Some of the Siamese in the same way offer cakes and rice to the trees before felling them, and the Talein of Burmah will pray to the spirit of the tree before they begin to cut the tree down[23]. Likewise in the Australian bush demons whistle in the branches, and in a variety of other eccentric ways make their presence manifest--reminding us of Ariel's imprisonment:[24]

*"Into a cloven pine; within which rift
Imprison'd, thou didst painfully remain,
A dozen years; ...
... Where thou didst vent thy groans,
As fast as mill-wheels strike."*

Similarly Miss Emerson, in her "Indian Myths" (1884, p. 134), quotes the story of "The Two Branches":

"One day there was a great noise in a tree under which Manabozho was taking a nap. It grew louder, and, at length exasperated, he leaped into the tree, caught the two branches whose war was the occasion of the din, and pulled them asunder. But with a spring on either hand, the two branches caught and pinioned Manabozho between them. Three days the god remained imprisoned, during which his outcries and lamentations were the subject of derision from every quarter--from the birds of the air, and from the animals of the woods and plains. To complete his sad case, the wolves ate the breakfast he had left beneath the tree. At length a good bear came to his rescue and released him, when the god disclosed his divine intuitions, for he returned home, and without delay beat his two wives."

Furthermore, we are told of the West Indian tribes, how, if any person going through a wood perceived a motion in the trees which he regarded as supernatural, frightened at the prodigy, he would address himself to that tree which shook the most. But such trees, however, did not condescend to converse, but ordered him to go to a boie, or priest, who would order him to sacrifice to their new deity.[25] From the same source we also learn[26] how among savage tribes those plants that produce great terrors, excitement, or a lethargic state, are supposed to contain a supernatural being. Hence in Peru, tobacco is known as the sacred herb, and from its invigorating effect superstitious veneration is paid to the weed. Many other plants have similar respect shown to them, and are used as talismans. Poisonous plants, again, from their deadly properties, have been held in the same repute;[27] and it is a very common practice among American Indians to hang a small bag containing poisonous herbs around the neck of a child, "as a talisman against diseases or attacks from wild beasts." It is commonly supposed that a child so protected is proof against every hurtful influence, from the fact of its being under the protection of the special spirits associated with the plant it wears.

Again, closely allied to beliefs of this kind is the notion of plants as the habitation of the departing soul, founded on the old doctrine of transmigration. Hence, referring to bygone times, we are told by

Empedocles that "there are two destinies for the souls of highest virtue -- to pass either into trees or into the bodies of lions." [28] Amongst the numerous illustrations of this mythological conception may be noticed the story told by Ovid,[29] who relates how Baucis and Philemon were rewarded in this manner for their charity to Zeus, who came a poor wanderer to their home. It appears that they not only lived to an extreme old age, but at the last were transformed into trees. Ovid, also, tells how the gods listened to the prayer of penitent Myrrha, and eventually turned her into a tree. Although, as Mr. Keary remarks, "she has lost understanding with her former shape, she still weeps, and the drops which fall from her bark (i.e., the myrrh) preserve the story of their mistress, so that she will be forgotten in no age to come."

The sisters of Phaëthon, bewailing his death on the shores of Eridanus, were changed into poplars. We may, too, compare the story of Daphne and Syrinx, who, when they could no longer elude the pursuit of Apollo and Pan, change themselves into a laurel and a reed. In modern times, Tasso and Spenser have given us graphic pictures based on this primitive phase of belief; and it may be remembered how Dante passed through that leafless wood, in the bark of every tree of which was imprisoned a suicide. In German folk-lore[30] the soul is supposed to take the form of a flower, as a lily or white rose; and according to a popular belief, one of these flowers appears on the chairs of those about to die. In the same way, from the grave of one unjustly executed white lilies are said to spring as a token of the person's innocence; and from that of a maiden, three lilies which no one save her lover must gather. The sex, moreover, it may be noted, is kept up even in this species of metempsychosis[31]. Thus, in a Servian folk-song, there grows out of the youth's body a green fir, out of the maiden's a red rose, which entwine together. Amongst further instances quoted by Grimm, we are told how, "a child carries home a bud which the angel had given him in the wood, when the rose blooms the child is dead. The Lay of Eunnifal makes a blackthorn shoot out of the bodies of slain heathens, a white flower by the heads of fallen Christians."

It is to this notion that Shakespeare alludes in "Hamlet," where Laertes wishes that violets may spring from the grave of Ophelia (v. I):

*"Lay her in the earth,
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring."*

A passage which is almost identical to one in the "Satires" of Persius (i. 39):

*"E tumulo fortunataque favilla,
Nascentur violae;"*

And an idea, too, which Tennyson seems to have borrowed:

*"And from his ashes may be made,
The violet of his native land."*

Again, in the well-known story of "Tristram and Ysonde," a further reference occurs: "From his grave there grew an eglantine which twined about the statue, a marvel for all men to see; and though three times they cut it down, it grew again, and ever wound its arms about the image of the fair Ysonde[32]." In the Scottish ballad of "Fair Margaret and Sweet William," it is related--

*"Out of her breast there sprang a rose,
And out of his a briar;
They grew till they grew unto the church top,
And there they tied in a true lovers' knot."*

The same idea has prevailed to a large extent among savage races. Thus, some of the North-Western Indians believed that those who died a natural death would be compelled to dwell among the branches of tall trees. The Brazilians have a mythological character called Mani--a child who died and was buried in the house of her mother. Soon a plant sprang out of the grave, which grew, flourished, and bore fruit. This plant, says Mr. Dorman,[33] was the Mandioca, named from Mani, and Oca, house. By the Mexicans marigolds are known as "death-flowers," from a legend that they sprang up on the ground stained by, "the life-blood of those who fell victims to the love of gold and cruelty of the early Spanish settlers in America."

Among the Virginian tribes, too, red clover was supposed to have sprung from and to be coloured by the blood of the red men slain in battle, with which may be compared the well-known legend connected with the lily of the valley formerly current in St. Leonard's Forest, Sussex. It is reported to have sprung from the blood of St. Leonard, who once encountered a mighty worm, or "fire-drake," in the forest, engaging with it for three successive days. Eventually the saint came off victorious, but not without being seriously wounded; and wherever his blood was shed there sprang up lilies of the valley in profusion. After the battle of Towton a certain kind of wild rose is reported to have sprung up in the field where the Yorkists and Lancastrians fell, only there to be found:

*"There still wild roses growing,
Frail tokens of the fray;
And the hedgerow green bears witness
Of Towton field that day." [33]*

In fact, there are numerous legends of this kind; and it may be remembered how Defoe, in his "Tour through Great Britain," speaks of a certain camp called Barrow Hill, adding, "they say this was a Danish camp, and everything hereabout is attributed to the Danes, because of the neighbouring Daventry, which they suppose to be built by them. The road hereabouts too, being overgrown with Dane-weed, they fancy it sprung from the blood of Danes slain in battle, and that if cut upon a certain day in the year, it bleeds." [34]

Similarly, the red poppies which followed the ploughing of the field of Waterloo after the Duke of Wellington's victory were said to have sprung from the blood of the troops who fell during the engagement; [35] and the

fruit of the mulberry, which was originally white, tradition tells us became empurpled through human blood, a notion which in Germany explains the colour of the heather. Once more, the mandrake, according to a superstition current in France and Germany, sprang up where the presence of a criminal had polluted the ground, and hence the old belief that it was generally found near a gallows. In Iceland it is commonly said that when innocent persons are put to death the sorb or mountain ash will spring up over their graves. Similar traditions cluster round numerous other plants, which, apart from being a revival of a very early primitive belief, form one of the prettiest chapters of our legendary tales. Although found under a variety of forms, and in some cases sadly corrupted from the dress they originally wore, yet in their main features they have not lost their individuality, but still retain their distinctive character.

In connection with the myths of plant life may be noticed that curious species of exotic plants, commonly known as "sensitive plants," and which have generally attracted considerable interest from their irritability when touched. Shelley has immortalised this curious freak of plant life in his charming poem, wherein he relates how,

*"The sensitive plant was the earliest,
Up-gathered into the bosom of rest;
A sweet child weary of its delight,
The feeblest and yet the favourite,
Cradled within the embrace of night."*

Who can wonder, on gazing at one of these wonderful plants, that primitive and uncultured tribes should have regarded such mysterious and inexplicable movements as indications of a distinct personal life.

Hence, as Darwin in his "Movements of Plants" remarks: "why a touch, slight pressure, or any other irritant, such as electricity, heat, or the absorption of animal matter, should modify the turgescence of the affected cells in such a manner as to cause movement, we do not know. But a touch acts in this manner so often, and on such widely distinct plants, that the tendency seems to be a very general one; and, if beneficial, it might be increased to any extent." If, therefore, one of the most eminent of recent scientific botanists confessed his inability to explain this strange peculiarity, we may excuse the savage if he regard it as another proof of a distinct personality in plant life. Thus, some years ago, a correspondent of the Botanical Register, describing the toad orchis (*Megaclinium bufo*), amusingly spoke as follows of its eccentric movements: "Let the reader imagine a green snake to be pressed flat like a dried flower, and then to have a road of toads, or some such speckled reptiles, drawn up along the middle in single file, their backs set up, their forelegs sprawling right and left, and their mouths wide open, with a large purple tongue wagging about

convulsively, and a pretty considerable approach will be gained to an idea of this plant, which, if Pythagoras had but known of it, would have rendered all arguments about the transmigration of souls superfluous." But, apart from the vein of jocularly running through these remarks, such striking vegetable phenomena are scientifically as great a puzzle to the botanist as their movements are to the savage, the latter regarding them as the outward visible expression of a real inward personal existence.

But, to quote another kind of sympathy between human beings and certain plants, the Cingalese have a notion that the cocoa-nut plant withers away when beyond the reach of a human voice, and that the vervain and borage will only thrive near man's dwellings. Once more, the South Sea Islanders affirm that the scent is the spirit of a flower, and that the dead may be sustained by their fragrance, they cover their newly-made graves with many a sweet smelling blossom.

Footnotes:

1. See Tylor's "Primitive Culture," 1873, i. 474-5; also Dorman's "Primitive Superstitions," 1881, p. 294. 2. "Primitive Culture," i. 476-7. 3. Jones's "Ojibways," p. 104. 4. Marsden's "History of Sumatra," p. 301. 5. Mariner's "Tonga Islands," ii. 137. 6. St. John, "Far East," i. 187.
7. See Tylor's "Primitive Culture," i. 475. 8. Dorman's "Primitive Superstitions," p. 294; also Schoolcraft Indian Tribes." 9. See Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," iii. 61. 10. "Origin of Civilisation," 1870, p. 192. See Leslie Forbes' "Earl Races of Scotland," i. 171. 11. Folkard's "Plant-lore, Legends, and Lyrics," p. 463. 12. Conway's "Mystic Trees and Flowers," Blackwood's Magazine, 1870, p. 594. 13. Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," i. 212. 14. See Black's "Folk-Medicine." 15. "Mystic Trees and Flowers," p. 594. 16. "Primitive Culture," ii. 215. 17. Metam., viii. 742-839; also Grimm's Teut. Myth., 1883, ii. 953-4. 18. Grimm's Teut. Myth., ii. 653. 19. Quoted in Tylor's "Primitive Culture," ii. 221. 20. Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," ii. 72, 73. 21. Ibid., p. 219. 22. "Superstitions of Modern Greece," by M. Le Baron d'Estournelles, in Nineteenth Century, April 1882, pp. 394, 395. 23. See Dorman's "Primitive Superstitions," p. 288. 24. "The Tempest," act i. sc. 2. 25. Dorman's "Primitive Superstitions," p. 288. 26. Ibid., p. 295. 27. See chapter on Demonology. 28. See Keary's "Outlines of Primitive Belief," 1882, pp. 66-7. 29. Metam., viii. 714:--"Frondere Philemona Baucis, Baucida conspexit senior frondere Philemon. 'Valeque, O conjux!' dixere simul, simul abdita textit Ora frutex." 30. Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," i. 290, iii. 271. 31. Grimm's "Teut. Mythology," ii. 827. 32. Cox and Jones' "Popular Romances of the Middle Ages," 1880, p. 139. 33. Smith's "Brazil," p. 586; "Primitive Superstitions," p. 293. 34. See Folkard's "Plant-lore, Legends, and Lyrics," p. 524. 35. See the Gardeners' Chronicle, 1875, p. 315.
36. According to another legend, forget-me-nots sprang up.

CHAPTER II.

PRIMITIVE AND SAVAGE NOTIONS RESPECTING PLANTS

The descent of the human race from a tree--however whimsical such a notion may seem--was a belief once received as sober fact, and even now-a-days can be traced amongst the traditions of many races.[1] This primitive idea of man's creation probably originated in the myth of Yggdrasil, the Tree of the Universe,[2] around which so much legendary lore has clustered, and for a full explanation of which an immense amount of learning has been expended, although the student of mythology has never yet been able to arrive at any definite solution on this deeply intricate subject. Without entering into the many theories proposed in connection with this mythical tree, it no doubt represented the life-giving forces of nature. It is generally supposed to have been an ash tree, but, as Mr. Conway[3] points out, "there is reason to think that through the confluence of traditions other sacred trees blended with it. Thus, while the ash bears no fruit, the Eddas describe the stars as the fruit of Yggdrasil."

Mr. Thorpe,[4] again, considers it identical with the "Robur Jovis," or sacred oak of Geismar, destroyed by Boniface, and the Irminsul of the Saxons, the Columna Universalis, "the terrestrial tree of offerings, an emblem of the whole world." At any rate the tree of the world, and the greatest of all trees, has long been identified in the northern mythology as the ash tree,[5] a fact which accounts for the weird character assigned to it amongst all the Teutonic and Scandinavian nations, frequent illustrations of which will occur in the present volume. Referring to the descent of man from the tree, we may quote the Edda, according to which all mankind are descended from the ash and the elm. The story runs that as Odhinn and his two brothers were journeying over the earth they discovered these two stocks "void of future," and breathed into them the power of life[6]:

*"Spirit they owned not,
Sense they had not,
Blood nor vigour,
Nor colour fair.
Spirit gave Odhinn,
Thought gave Hoenir,
Blood gave Lodr
And colour fair."*

This notion of tree-descent appears to have been popularly believed in olden days in Italy and Greece, illustrations of which occur in the literature of that period. Thus Virgil writes in the Aeneid[7]:

*"These woods were first the seat of sylvan powers,
Of nymphs and fauns, and savage men who took
Their birth from trunks of trees and stubborn oak."*

Romulus and Remus had been found under the famous Ficus Ruminalis, which seems to suggest a connection with a tree parentage. It is true, as Mr. Keary remarks,[8] that, "in the legend which we have received it is in this instance only a case of finding; but if we could go back to an earlier tradition, we should probably see that the relation between the mythical times and the tree had been more intimate."

Juvenal, it may be remembered, gives a further allusion to tree descent in his sixth satire[9]:

*"For when the world was new, the race that broke
Unfathered, from the soil or opening oak,
Lived most unlike the men of later times."*

In Greece the oak as well as the ash was accounted a tree whence men had sprung; hence in the "Odyssey," the disguised hero is asked to state his pedigree, since he must necessarily have one; "for," says the interrogator, "belike you are not come of the oak told of in old times, nor of the rock." [10] Hesiod tells us how Jove made the third or brazen race out of ash trees, and Hesychius speaks of "the fruit of the ash the race of men." Phoroneus, again, according to the Grecian legend, was born of the ash, and we know, too, how among the Greeks certain families kept up the idea of a tree parentage; the Pelopidae having been said to be descended from the plane. Among the Persians the Achaemenidae had the same tradition respecting the origin of their house.[11] From the numerous instances illustrative of tree-descent, it is evident, as Mr. Keary points out, that, "there was once a fuller meaning than metaphor in the language which spoke of the roots and branches of a family, or in such expressions as the pathetic "Ah, woe, beloved shoot!" of Euripides." [12] Furthermore, as he adds, "Even when the literal notion of the descent from a tree had been lost sight of, the close connection between the prosperity of the tribe and the life of its fetish was often strictly held. The village tree of the German races was originally a tribal tree, with whose existence the life of the village was involved; and when we read of Christian saints and confessors, that they made a point of cutting down these half idols, we cannot wonder at the rage they called forth, nor that they often paid the penalty of their courage."

Similarly we can understand the veneration bestowed on the forest tree from associations of this kind. Consequently, as it has been remarked,[13] "At a time when rude beginnings were all that were of the builder's art, the human mind must have been roused to a higher devotion by the sight of lofty trees under an open sky, than it could feel inside the stunted structures reared by unskilled hands. When long afterwards the architecture peculiar to the Teutonic reached its perfection, did it not in its boldest creations still aim at reproducing the soaring trees of the forest? Would not the abortion of miserably carved or chiseled images lag far behind the form of the god which the youthful imagination of antiquity pictured to itself throned on the bowery summit of a sacred tree."

It has been asked whether the idea of the Yggdrasil and the tree-descent may not be connected with the "tree of life" of Genesis. Without, however, entering into a discussion on this complex point, it is worthy of note that in several of the primitive mythologies we find distinct counterparts of the biblical account of the tree of life; and it seems quite possible that these corrupt forms of the Mosaic history of creation may, in a measure, have suggested the conception of the world tree, and the descent of mankind from a tree. On this subject the late Mr. R.J. King[14] has given us the following interesting remarks in his paper on "Sacred Trees and Flowers":

"How far the religious systems of the great nations of antiquity were affected by the record of the creation and fall preserved in the opening chapters of Genesis, it is not, perhaps, possible to determine. There are certain points of resemblance which are at least remarkable, but which we may assign, if we please, either to independent tradition, or to a natural development of the earliest or primeval period. The trees of life and of knowledge are at once suggested by the mysterious sacred tree which appears in the most ancient sculptures and paintings of Egypt and Assyria, and in those of the remoter East. In the symbolism of these nations the sacred tree sometimes figures as a type of the universe, and represents the whole system of created things, but more frequently as a tree of life, by whose fruit the votaries of the gods (and in some cases the gods themselves) are nourished with divine strength, and are prepared for the joys of immortality. The most ancient types of this mystical tree of life are the date palm, the fig, and the pine or cedar."

By way of illustration, it may be noted that the ancient Egyptians had their legend of the "Tree of Life". It is mentioned in their sacred books that Osiris ordered the names of souls to be written on this tree of life, the fruit of which made those who ate it become as gods.[15] Among the most ancient traditions of the Hindoos is that of the tree of life--called Soma in Sanskrit--the juice of which imparted immortality; this marvellous tree being guarded by spirits. Coming down to later times, Virgil speaks of a sacred tree in a manner which Grimm[16] considers highly suggestive of the Yggdrasil:

*"Jove's own tree,
High as his topmost boughs to heaven ascend,
So low his roots to hell's dominions tend."*

As already mentioned, numerous legendary stories have become interwoven with the myth of the Yggdrasil, the following sacred one combining the idea of tree-descent. According to a trouvère of the thirteenth century,[17] "The tree of life was, a thousand years after the sin of the first man, transplanted from the Garden of Eden to the Garden of Abraham, and an angel came from heaven to tell the patriarch that upon this tree should hang the freedom of mankind. But first from the same tree of life Jesus should be born, and in the following wise. First was to be born a knight, Fanouel, who, through the scent merely of the flower of that living tree, should be engendered in the womb of a virgin; and this knight again, without knowing woman, should give birth to St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary. Both these wonders fell out as they were foretold. A virgin bore Fanouel by smelling the tree; and Fanouel having once come unawares to that tree of life, and cut a fruit from it, wiped his knife against his thigh, in which he inflicted a slight wound, and thus let in some of the juice. Presently his thigh began to swell, and eventually St. Anne was born therefrom."

But turning to survivals of this form of animism among uncultured tribes, we may quote the Damaras, a South African race, with whom "a tree is supposed to be the universal progenitor, two of which divide the honour." [18] According to their creed, "In the beginning of things there was a tree, and out of this tree came Damaras, bushmen, oxen, and zebras. The Damaras lit a fire which frightened away the bushmen and the oxen, but the zebras remained."

Hence it is that bushmen and wild beasts live together in all sorts of inaccessible places, while the Damaras and oxen possess the land. The tree gave birth to everything else that lives. The natives of the Philippines, writes Mr. Marsden in his "History of Sumatra," have a curious tradition of tree-descent, and in accordance with their belief, "The world at first consisted only of sky and water, and between these two a glède; which, weary with flying about, and finding no place to rest, set the water at variance with the sky, which, in order to keep it in bounds, and that it should not get uppermost, loaded the water with a number of islands, in which the glède might settle and leave them at peace. Mankind, they said, sprang out of a large cane with two joints, that, floating about in the water, was at length thrown by the waves against the feet of the glède as it stood on shore, which opened it with its bill; the man came out of one joint, the woman out of the other. These were soon after married by the consent of their god, Bathala

Meycapal, which caused the first trembling of the earth,[19] and from thence are descended the different nations of the world."

Several interesting instances are given by Mr. Dorman, who tells us how the natives about Saginaw had a tradition of a boy who sprang from a tree within which was buried one of their tribe. The founders of the Miztec monarchy are said to be descended from two majestic trees that stood in a gorge of the mountain of Apoala. The Chiapanecas had a tradition that they sprang from the roots of a silk cotton tree; while the Zapotecas attributed their origin to trees, their cypresses and palms often receiving offerings of incense and other gifts. The Tamanaquas of South America have a tradition that the human race sprang from the fruits of the date palm after the Mexican age of water.[20]

Again, our English nursery fable of the parsley-bed, in which little strangers are discovered, is perhaps, "A remnant of a fuller tradition, like that of the woodpecker among the Romans, and that of the stork among our Continental kinsmen." [21] Both these birds having had a mystic celebrity, the former as the fire-singing bird and guardian genius of children, the latter as the baby-bringer. [22] In Saterland it is said "infants are fetched out of the cabbage," and in the Walloon part of Belgium they are supposed "to make their appearance in the parson's garden." Once more, a hollow tree overhanging a pool is known in many places, both in North and South Germany, as the first abode of unborn infants, variations of this primitive belief being found in different localities. Similar stories are very numerous, and under various forms are found in the legendary lore and folk-tales of most countries.

Footnotes:

1. See Keary's "Outlines of Primitive Belief," 1882, pp. 62-3.
2. See Grimm's "Teutonic Mythology," 1883, ii. 796-800; Quarterly Review, cxiv. 224; Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," i. 154; "Asgard and the Gods," edited by W. S. W. Anson, 1822, pp. 26, 27.
3. Fraser's Magazine, 1870, p. 597.
4. "Northern Mythology," i. 154-5.
5. See Max Miller's "Chips from a German Workshop."
6. See Keary's "Outlines of Primitive Belief," p. 64.
7. Book viii. p. 314.
8. "Outlines of Primitive Belief," p. 63.
9. Gifford.
10. Kelly's "Indo-European Folk-lore," p. 143.
11. Keary's "Outlines of Primitive Belief," p. 63; Fiske, "Myth and Myth Makers," 1873, pp. 64-5.
12. "Primitive Belief," p. 65.
13. Grimm's "Teutonic Mythology," i. 69.
14. Quarterly Review, 1863, cxiv. 214-15.
15. See Bunsen's "The Keys of St Peter," &c., 1867, p. 414.
16. "Teutonic Mythology."
17. Quoted by Mr. Keary from Leroux de Lincy, "Le Livre des égendes," p. 24.
18. Gallon's "South Africa," p. 188.
19. "Primitive Superstitions," p. 289.
20. Folkard's "Plant Lore," p. 311.
21. "Indo-European Folk-lore," p. 92.
22. Grimm's "Teutonic Mythology," ii. 672-3.

CHAPTER III.

PLANT-WORSHIP.

A form of religion which seems to have been widely-distributed amongst most races of mankind at a certain stage of their mental culture is plant-worship. Hence it holds a prominent place in the history of primitive belief, and at the present day prevails largely among rude and uncivilised races, survivals of which even linger on in our own country.

To trace back the history of plant-worship would necessitate an inquiry into the origin and development of the nature-worshipping phase of religious belief. Such a subject of research would introduce us to those pre-historic days when human intelligence had succeeded only in selecting for worship the grand and imposing objects of sight and sense. Hence, as Mr. Keary observes,[1] "The gods of the early world are the rock and the mountain, the tree, the river, the sea;" and Mr. Fergusson[2] is of opinion that tree-worship, in association with serpent-worship, must be reckoned as the primitive faith of mankind. In the previous chapter we have already pointed out how the animistic theory which invested the tree and grove with a conscious personality accounts for much of the worship and homage originally ascribed to them--identified, too, as they were later on, with the habitations of certain spirits. Whether viewed, therefore, in the light of past or modern inquiry, we find scattered throughout most countries various phases of plant-worship, a striking proof of its universality in days gone by.[3]

According to Mr. Fergusson, tree-worship has sprung from a perception of the beauty and utility of trees. "With all their poetry," he argues, "and all their usefulness, we can hardly feel astonished that the primitive races of mankind should have considered trees as the choicest gifts of the gods to men, and should have believed that their spirits still delighted to dwell among their branches, or spoke oracles through the rustling of their leaves." But Mr. McLennan[4] does not consider that this is conclusive, adding that such a view of the subject, "Does not at all meet the case of the shrubs, creepers, marsh-plants, and weeds that have been worshipped." He would rather connect it with Totemism,[5] urging that the primitive stages of religious evolution go to show that, "The ancient nations came, in pre-historic times, through the Totem stage, having animals, and plants, and the heavenly bodies conceived as animals, for gods before the anthropomorphic gods appeared;" While Mr. Herbert Spencer[6] again considers that, "Plant-worship, like the worship of idols and animals, is an aberrant species of ancestor-worship--a species somewhat more disguised externally, but having the same internal nature." Anyhow the subject is one concerning

which the comparative mythologist has, at different times, drawn opposite theories; but of this there can be no doubt, that plant-worship was a primitive faith of mankind, a fact in connection with which we may quote Sir John Lubbock's words,[7] how, "By man in this stage of progress everything was regarded as having life, and being more or less a deity." Indeed, sacred rivers appear in the very earliest mythologies which have been recovered, and lingered among the last vestiges of heathenism long after the advent of a purer creed. As, too, it has been remarked,[8] "Either as direct objects of worship, or as forming the temple under whose solemn shadow other and remoter deities might be adored, there is no part of the world in which trees have not been regarded with especial reverence.

*'In such green palaces the first kings reigned;
Slept in their shade, and angels entertained.
With such old counsellors they did advise,
And by frequenting sacred shades grew wise.'*

Even Paradise itself, says Evelyn, was but a kind of 'nemorous temple or sacred grove,' planted by God himself, and given to man tanquam primo sacerdoti; and he goes on to suggest that the groves which the patriarchs are recorded to have planted in different parts of Palestine may have been memorials of that first tree-shaded paradise from which Adam was expelled."

Briefly noticing the antecedent history of plant-worship, it would seem to have lain at the foundation of the old Celtic creed, although few records on this point have come down to us.[9] At any rate we have abundant evidence that this form of belief held a prominent place in the religion of these people, allusions to which are given by many of the early classical writers. Thus the very name of Druidism is a proof of the Celtic addiction to tree-worship, and De Brosses,[10] as a further evidence that this was so, would derive the word kirk, now softened into church, from quercus, an oak; that species having been peculiarly sacred. Similarly, in reviewing the old Teutonic beliefs, we come across the same references to tree-worship, in many respects displaying little or no distinction from that of the Celts. In explanation of this circumstance, Mr. Keary[11] suggests that, "The nature of the Teutonic beliefs would apply, with only some slight changes, to the creed of the predecessors of the Germans in Northern and Western Europe. Undoubtedly, in prehistoric days, the Germans and Celts merged so much one into the other that their histories cannot well be distinguished."

Mr. Fergusson in his elaborate researches has traced many indications of tree-adoration in Germany, noticing their continuance in the Christian period, as proved by Grimm, whose opinion is that, "the festal universal religion of the people had its abode in woods," while the Christmas tree of

present German celebration in all families is "almost undoubtedly a remnant of the tree-worship of their ancestors."

According to Mr. Fergusson, one of the last and best-known examples of the veneration of groves and trees by the Germans after their conversion to Christianity, is that of the "Stock am Eisen" in Vienna, "The sacred tree into which every apprentice, down to recent times, before setting out on his "Wanderjahre", drove a nail for luck. It now stands in the centre of that great capital, the last remaining vestige of the sacred grove, round which the city has grown up, and in sight of the proud cathedral, which has superseded and replaced its more venerable shade."

Equally undoubted is the evidence of tree-worship in Greece—particular trees having been sacred to many of the gods. Thus we have the oak tree or beech of Jupiter, the laurel of Apollo, the vine of Bacchus. The olive is the well-known tree of Minerva. The myrtle was sacred to Aphrodite, and the apple of the Hesperides belonged to Juno.[12] As a writer too in the *Edinburgh Review*[13] remarks, "The oak grove at Dodona is sufficiently evident to all classic readers to need no detailed mention of its oracles, or its highly sacred character. The sacrifice of Agamemnon in Aulis, as told in the opening of the *Iliad*,' connects the tree and serpent worship together, and the wood of the sacred plane tree under which the sacrifice was made was preserved in the temple of Diana as a holy relic so late, according to Pausanias, as the second century of the Christian era." The same writer further adds that in Italy traces of tree-worship, if not so distinct and prominent as in Greece, are nevertheless existent. Romulus, for instance, is described as hanging the arms and weapons of Acron, King of Cenina, upon an oak tree held sacred by the people, which became the site of the famous temple of Jupiter.

Then, again, turning to Bible history,[14] the denunciations of tree-worship are very frequent and minute, not only in connection with the worship of Baal, but as mentioned in 2 Kings ix.: "And they (the children of Israel) set themselves up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree." These acts, it has been remarked, "may be attributable more to heretical idolatrous practices into which the Jews had temporarily fallen in imitation of the heathen around them, but at the same time they furnish ample proof of the existence of tree and grove worship by the heathen nations of Syria as one of their most solemn rites." But, from the period of King Hezekiah down to the Christian era, Mr. Fergusson finds no traces of tree-worship in Judea. In Assyria tree-worship was a common form of idolatrous veneration, as proved by Lord Aberdeen's black-stone, and many of the plates in the works of Layard and Botta.[15] Turning to India, tree-worship probably has always belonged to Aryan Hinduism, and as tree-worship did not belong to the aboriginal races of India, and was not adopted from them, "it must have formed part of the pantheistic worship of

the Vedic system which endowed all created things with a spirit and life--a doctrine which modern Hinduism largely extended[16]."

Thus when food is cooked, an oblation is made by the Hindu to trees, with an appropriate invocation before the food is eaten. The Bo tree is extensively worshipped in India, and the Toolsee plant (Basil) is held sacred to all gods--no oblation being considered sacred without its leaves. Certain of the Chittagong hill tribes worship the bamboo,[17] and Sir John Lubbock, quoting from Thompson's "Travels in the Himalaya," tells us that in the Simla hills the Cupressus toridosa is regarded as a sacred tree. Further instances might be enumerated, so general is this form of religious belief. In an interesting and valuable paper by a Bengal civilian--intimately acquainted with the country and people[18]--the writer says:--"The contrast between the acknowledged hatred of trees as a rule by the Bygas,[19] and their deep veneration for certain others in particular, is very curious. I have seen the hillsides swept clear of forests for miles with but here and there a solitary tree left standing. These remain now the objects of the deepest veneration. So far from being injured they are carefully preserved, and receive offerings of food, clothes, and flowers from the passing Bygas, who firmly believe that tree to be the home of a spirit." To give another illustration[20], it appears that in Beerbhoom once a year the whole capital repairs to a shrine in the jungle, and makes simple offerings to a ghost who dwells in the Bela tree. The shrine consists of three trees--a Bela tree on the left, in which the ghost resides, and which is marked at the foot with blood; in the middle is a Kachmula tree, and on the right a Saura tree. In spite of the trees being at least seventy years old, the common people claim the greatest antiquity for the shrine, and tradition says that the three trees that now mark the spot neither grow thicker nor increase in height, but remain the same for ever.

A few years ago Dr. George Birwood contributed to the Athenaeum some interesting remarks on Persian flower-worship. Speaking of the Victoria Gardens at Bombay, he says:--"A true Persian in flowing robe of blue, and on his head his sheep-skin hat--black, glossy, curled, the fleece of Kar-Kal--would saunter in, and stand and meditate over every flower he saw, and always as if half in vision. And when the vision was fulfilled, and the ideal flower he was seeking found, he would spread his mat and sit before it until the setting of the sun, and then pray before it, and fold up his mat again and go home. And the next night, and night after night, until that particular flower faded away, he would return to it, and bring his friends in ever-increasing troops to it, and sit and play the guitar or lute before it, and they would all together pray there, and after prayer still sit before it sipping sherbet, and talking the most hilarious and shocking scandal, late into the moonlight; and so again and again every evening until the flower died. Sometimes, by way of a grand finale, the whole company would suddenly rise before the flower and serenade it, together with an ode from Hafiz, and

depart." Tree-worship too has been more or less prevalent among the American Indians, abundant illustrations of which have been given by travelers at different periods. In many cases a striking similarity is noticeable, showing a common origin, a circumstance which is important to the student of comparative mythology when tracing the distribution of religious beliefs. The Dacotahs worship the medicine-wood, so called from a belief that it was a genius which protected or punished them according to their merits or demerits.[21] Darwin[22] mentions a tree near Siena de la Ventana to which the Indians paid homage as the altar of Walleechu; offerings of cigars, bread, and meat having been suspended upon it by threads. The tree was surrounded by bleached bones of horses that had been sacrificed. Mr. Tylor[23] speaks of an ancient cypress existing in Mexico, which he thus describes:--"All over its branches were fastened votive offerings of the Indians, hundreds of locks of coarse black hair, teeth, bits of coloured cloth, rags, and morsels of ribbon. The tree was many centuries old, and had probably had some mysterious influence ascribed to it, and been decorated with such simple offerings long before the discovery of America."

Once more, the Calchaquis of Brazil[24] have been in the habit of worshipping certain trees which were frequently decorated by the Indians with feathers; and Charlevoix narrates another interesting instance of tree-worship:--"Formerly the Indians in the neighbourhood of Acadia had in their country, near the sea-shore, a tree extremely ancient, of which they relate many wonders, and which was always laden with offerings.

After the sea had laid open its whole root, it then supported itself a long time almost in the air against the violence of the winds and waves, which confirmed those Indians in the notion that the tree must be the abode of some powerful spirit; nor was its fall even capable of undeceiving them, so that as long as the smallest part of its branches appeared above the water, they paid it the same honours as whilst it stood."

In North America, according to Franklin,[25] the Crees used to hang strips of buffalo flesh and pieces of cloth on their sacred tree; and in Nicaragua maize and beans were worshipped. By the natives of Carolina the tea-plant was formerly held in veneration above all other plants, and indeed similar phases of superstition are very numerous. Traces of tree-worship occur in Africa, and Sir John Lubbock[26] mentions the sacred groves of the Marghi--a dense part of the forest surrounded with a ditch--where in the most luxuriant and widest spreading tree their god, Zumbri, is worshipped. In his valuable work on Ceylon, Sir J. Emerson Tennent gives some interesting details about the consecration of trees to different demons to insure their safety, and of the ceremonies performed by the kattadias or devil-priests. It appears that whenever the assistance of a devil-dancer is required in extreme cases of sickness, various formalities are observed after the following fashion. An altar is erected, profusely adorned with garlands

and flowers, within sight of the dying man, who is ordered to touch and dedicate to the evil spirit the wild flowers, rice, and flesh laid upon it.

Traces of plant-worship are still found in Europe. Before sunrise on Good Friday the Bohemians are in the habit of going into their gardens, and after falling on their knees before a tree, to say, "I pray, O green tree, that God may make thee good," a formula which Mr. Ralston[27] considers has probably been altered under the influence of Christianity "from a direct prayer to the tree to a prayer for it." At night they run about the garden exclaiming, "Bud, O trees, bud! or I will flog you." On the following day they shake the trees, and clank their keys, while the church bells are ringing, under the impression that the more noise they make the more fruit will they get. Traces, too, of tree-worship, adds Mr. Ralston,[28] may be found in the song which the Russian girls sing as they go out into the woods to fetch the birch tree at Whitsuntide, and to gather flowers for wreaths and garlands:

*"Rejoice not, oaks;
Rejoice not, green oaks.
Not to you go the maidens;
Not to you do they bring pies,
Cakes, omelettes.
So, so, Semik and Troitsa [Trinity]!
Rejoice, birch trees, rejoice, green ones!
To you go the maidens!
To you they bring pies,
Cakes, omelettes."*

The eatables here mentioned probably refer to the sacrifices offered in olden days to the birch--the tree of the spring. With this practice we may compare one long observed in our own country, and known as "wassailing." At certain seasons it has long been customary in Devonshire for the farmer, on the eve of Twelfth-day, to go into the orchard after supper with a large milk pail of cider with roasted apples pressed into it. Out of this each person in the company takes what is called a clome--i.e., earthenware cup--full of liquor, and standing under the more fruitful apple trees, address them in these words:

*"Health to thee, good apple tree,
Well to bear pocket fulls, hat fulls,
Peck fulls, bushel bag fulls."*

After the formula has been repeated, the contents of the cup are thrown at the trees.[29] There are numerous allusions to this form of tree-worship in the literature of the past; and Tusser, among his many pieces of advice to the husbandman, has not omitted to remind him that he should,

*"Wassail the trees, that they may bear
You many a plum and many a pear;
For more or less fruit they will bring,
As you do them wassailing."*

Survivals of this kind show how tenaciously old superstitious rites struggle for existence even when they have ceased to be recognised as worthy of belief.

Footnotes:

1. "Outlines of Primitive Belief," 1882, p. 54. 2. "Tree and Serpent Worship." 3. See Sir John Lubbock's "Origin of Civilisation," pp. 192-8. 4. Fortnightly Review, "The Worship of Animals and Plants," 1870,vii. 213. 5. Ibid., 1869, vi. 408. 6. "Principles of Sociology," 1885, i. p. 359.
7. "The Origin of Civilisation and Primitive Condition of Man." 8. Quarterly Review, cxiv. 212. 9. Keary's "Primitive Brliief," pp. 332-3; Edinburgh Review, cxxx.488-9. 10. "Du Culte des Dieux Fetiches," p. 169. 11. "Primitive Belief," pp. 332-3. 12. Fergusson's "Tree and Serpent Worship," p. 16. 13. cxxx. 492; see Tacitus' "Germania," ix. 14. See Edinburgh Review, cxxx. 490-1. 15. Edinburgh Review, cxxx. 491. 16. Mr. Fergusson's "Tree and Serpent Worship." See Edinburgh Review, cxxx. 498. 17. See Lewin's "Hill Tracts of Chittagong," p. 10. 18. Cornhill Magazine, November 1872, p. 598. 19. An important tribe in Central India. 20. See Sherring's "Sacred City of the Hindus," 1868, p. 89. 21. Dorman's "Primitive Superstitions," p. 291. 22. See "Researches in Geology and Natural History," p. 79. 23. "Anahuac," 215, 265. 24. Dorman's "Primitive Superstitions." p. 292. 25. "Journeys to the Polar Sea." i. 221. 26. "The Origin of Civilisation." 27. "Songs of the Russian People." p. 219. 28. Ibid, p. 238. 29. See my "British Popular Customs." p. 21.

CHAPTER IV.

LIGHTNING PLANTS.

Amongst the legends of the ancient world few subjects occupy a more prominent place than lightning, associated as it is with those myths of the origin of fire which are of such wide distribution.[1] In examining these survivals of primitive culture we are confronted with some of the most elaborate problems of primeval philosophy, many of which are not only highly complicated, but have given rise to various conjectures. Thus, although it is easy to understand the reasons which led our ancestors, in their childlike ignorance, to speak of the lightning as a worm, serpent, trident, arrow, or forked wand, yet the contrary is the case when we inquire why it was occasionally symbolised as a flower or leaf, or when, as Mr. Fiske[2] remarks, "we seek to ascertain why certain trees, such as the ash, hazel, white thorn, and mistletoe, were supposed to be in a certain sense embodiments of it."

Indeed, however satisfactory our explanations may apparently seem, in many cases they can only be regarded as ingenious theories based on the most probable theories which the science of comparative folk-lore may have suggested. In analysing, too, the evidence for determining the possible association of ideas which induced our primitive forefathers to form those mythical conceptions that we find embodied in the folk-tales of most races, it is necessary to unravel from the relics of the past the one common notion that underlies them. Respecting the origin of fire, for instance, the leading idea--as handed down to us in myths of this kind--would make us believe that it was originally stolen. Stories which point to this conclusion are not limited to any one country, but are shared by races widely remote from one another. This circumstance is important, as helping to explain the relation of particular plants to lightning, and accounts for the superstitious reverence so frequently paid to them by most Aryan tribes. Hence, the way by which the Veda argues the existence of the palasa--a mystic tree with the Hindus--is founded on the following tradition:--The demons had stolen the heavenly soma, or drink of the gods, and cellared it in some mythical rock or cloud. When the thirsty deities were pining for their much-prized liquor, the falcon undertook to restore it to them, although he succeeded at the cost of a claw and a plume, of which he was deprived by the graze of an arrow shot by one of the demons. Both fell to the earth and took root; the claw becoming a species of thorn, which Dr. Kuhn identifies as the "*Mimosa catechu*," and the feather a "palasa tree," which has a red sap and scarlet blossoms. With such a divine origin--for the falcon was nothing less

than a lightning god[3]--the trees naturally were incorporations,[4] "not only of the heavenly fire, but also of the soma, with which the claw and feather were impregnated."

It is not surprising, therefore, that extraordinary virtues were ascribed to these lightning plants, qualities which, in no small degree, distinguish their representatives at the present day. Thus we are told how in India the mimosa is known as the imperial tree on account of its remarkable properties, being credited as an efficacious charm against all sorts of malignant influences, such as the evil eye. Not unlike in colour to the blossom of the Indian palasa are the red berries of the rowan or mountain-ash (*Pyrus aucuparia*), a tree which has acquired European renown from the Aryan tradition of its being an embodiment of the lightning from which it was sprung. It has acquired, therefore, a mystic character, evidences of which are numerous represented throughout Europe, where its leaves are revered as being the most potent talisman against the darker powers. At the present day we still find the Highland milkmaid carrying with her a rowan-cross against unforeseen danger, just as in many a German village twigs are put over stables to keep out witches. Illustrations of this kind support its widespread reputation for supernatural virtues, besides showing how closely allied is much of the folk-lore of our own with that of continental countries. At the same time, we feel inclined to agree with Mr. Farrer that the red berries of the mountain-ash probably singled it out from among trees for worship long before our ancestors had arrived at any idea of abstract divinities. The beauty of its berries, added to their brilliant red colour, would naturally excite feelings of admiration and awe, and hence it would in process of time become invested with a sacred significance. It must be remembered, too, that all over the world there is a regard for things red, this colour having been once held sacred to Thor, and Grimm suggests that it was on this account the robin acquired its sacred character. Similarly, the Highland women tie a piece of red worsted thread round their cows' tails previous to turning them out to grass for the first time in spring, for, in accordance with an old adage:

*"Rowan-ash, and red thread,
Keep the devils from their speed."*

In the same way the mothers in Esthonia put some red thread in their babies' cradles as a preservative against danger, and in China something red is tied round children's wrists as a safeguard against evil spirits. By the aid of comparative folk-lore it is interesting, as in this case, to trace the same notion in different countries, although it is by no means possible to account for such undesigned resemblance. The common ash

(*Fraxinus excelsior*), too, is a lightning plant, and, according to an old couplet:

*"Avoid an ash,
It counts the flash."*

Another tree held sacred to Thor was the hazel (*Corylus avellana*), which, like the mountain-ash, was considered an actual embodiment of the lightning. Indeed, "so deep was the faith of the people in the relation of this tree to the thunder god," says Mr. Conway,[5] "that the Catholics adopted and sanctioned it by a legend one may hear in Bavaria, that on their flight into Egypt the Holy Family took refuge under it from a storm."

Its supposed immunity from all damage by lightning has long caused special reverence to be attached to it, and given rise to sundry superstitious usages. Thus, in Germany, a twig is cut by the farm-labourer, in spring, and on the first thunderstorm a cross is made with it over every heap of grain, whereby, it is supposed, the corn will remain good for many years. Occasionally, too, one may see hazel twigs placed in the window frames during a heavy shower, and the Tyroleans regard it as an excellent lightning conductor. As a promoter of fruitfulness it has long been held in high repute--a character which it probably derived from its mythic associations--and hence the important part it plays in love divinations. According to a Bohemian belief, the presence of a large number of hazel-nuts betokens the birth of many illegitimate children; and in the Black Forest it is customary for the leader of a marriage procession to carry a hazel wand. For the same reason, in many parts of Germany, a few nuts are mingled with the seed corn to insure its being prolific. But leaving the hazel with its host of superstitions, we may notice the white-thorn, which according to Aryan tradition was also originally sprung from the lightning. Hence it has acquired a wide reverence, and been invested with supernatural properties. Like, too, the hazel, it was associated with marriage rites. Thus the Grecian bride was and is still decked with its blossoms, whereas its wood formed the torch which lighted the Roman bridal couple to their nuptial chamber on the wedding day. It is evident, therefore, that the white-thorn was considered a sacred tree long before Christian tradition identified it as forming the Crown of Thorns; a medieval belief which further enhanced the sanctity attached to it. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Irish consider it unlucky to cut down this holy tree, especially as it is said to be under the protection of the fairies, who resent any injury done to it. A legend current in county Donegal, for instance, tells us how a fairy had tried to steal one Joe M'Donough's baby, but the poor mother argued that she had never affronted the fairy tribe to her knowledge. The only cause

she could assign was that Joe, "had helped Mr. Todd's gardener to cut down the old hawthorn tree on the lawn; and there's them that says that's a very bad thing to do;" adding how she "fleeched him not to touch it, but the master he offered him six shillings if he'd help in the job, for the other men refused." The same belief prevails in Brittany, where it is also "held unsafe to gather even a leaf from certain old and solitary thorns, which grow in sheltered hollows of the moorland, and are the fairies' trysting-places." [6]

Then there is the mistletoe, which, like the hazel and the white-thorn, was also supposed to be the embodiment of lightning; and in consequence of its mythical character held an exalted place in the botanical world. As a lightning-plant, we seem to have the key to its symbolical nature, in the circumstance that its branch is forked. On the same principle, it is worthy of note, as Mr. Fiske remarks [7] that, "the Hindu commentators of the Veda certainly lay great stress on the fact that the palasa is trident-leaved." We have already pointed out, too, how the red colour of a flower, as in the case of the berries of the mountain-ash, was apparently sufficient to determine the association of ideas. The Swiss name for mistletoe, *donnerbesen*, "thunder besom," illustrates its divine origin, on account of which it was supposed to protect the homestead from fire, and hence in Sweden it has long been suspended in farm-houses, like the mountain-ash in Scotland. But its virtues are by no means limited, for like all lightning-plants its potency is displayed in a variety of ways, its healing properties having from a remote period been in the highest repute. For purposes also of sorcery it has been reckoned of considerable importance, and as a preventive of nightmare and other night scares it is still in favour on the Continent. One reason which no doubt has obtained for it a marked degree of honour is its parasitical manner of growth, which was in primitive times ascribed to the intervention of the gods. According to one of its traditionary origins, its seed was said to be deposited on certain trees by birds, the messengers of the gods, if not the gods themselves in disguise, by which this plant established itself in the branch of a tree. The mode of procedure, say the old botanists, was through the "mistletoe thrush." This bird, it was asserted, by feeding on the berries, surrounded its beak with the viscid mucus they contain, to rid itself of which it rubbed its beak, in the course of flying, against the branches of trees, and thereby inserted the seed which gave birth to the new plant. When the mistletoe was found growing on the oak, its presence was attributed specially to the gods, and as such was treated with the deepest reverence. It was not, too, by accident that the oak was selected, as this tree was honoured by Aryan tradition with being of lightning origin. Hence when the mistletoe was found on its branches, the occurrence was considered as deeply significant, and all the more so as its existence in such a locality was held

to be very rare[8]. Speaking of the oak, it may be noted, that as sacred to Thor, it was under his immediate protection, and hence it was considered an act of sacrilege to mutilate it in ever so small a degree. Indeed, "it was a law of the Ostrogoths that anybody might hew down what trees he pleased in the common wood, except oaks and hazels; those trees had peace, i.e., they were not to be felled[9]." That profanity of this kind was not treated with immunity was formerly fully believed, an illustration of which is given us by Aubrey,[10] who says that, "to cut oakwood is unfortunate. There was at Norwood one oak that had mistletoe, a timber tree, which was felled about 1657. Some persons cut this mistletoe for some apothecaries in London, and sold them a quantity for ten shillings each time, and left only one branch remaining for more to sprout out. One fell lame shortly after; soon after each of the others lost an eye, and he that felled the tree, though warned of these misfortunes of the other men, would, notwithstanding, adventure to do it, and shortly afterwards broke his leg; as if the Hamadryads had resolved to take an ample revenge for the injury done to their venerable and sacred oak." We can understand, then, how the custom originated of planting the oak on the boundaries of lands, a survival of which still remains in the so-called gospel oaks of many of our English parishes. With Thor's tree thus standing our forefathers felt a sense of security which materially added to the peace and comfort of their daily life.

But its sacred attributes were not limited to this country, many a legend on the Continent testifying to the safety afforded by its sheltering branches. Indeed, so great are its virtues that, according to a Westphalian tradition, the Wandering Jew can only rest where he shall happen to find two oaks growing in the form of a cross. A further proof of its exalted character may be gathered from the fact that around its roots Scandinavian mythology has gathered fairyland, and hence in Germany the holes in its trunk are the pathways for elves. But the connection between lightning and plants extends over a wide area, and Germany is rich in legends relative to this species of folk-lore. Thus there is the magic springwort, around which have clustered so many curious lightning myths and talismanic properties. By reason of its celestial origin this much-coveted plant, when buried in the ground at the summit of a mountain, has the reputation of drawing down the lightning and dividing the storm. It is difficult, however, to procure, especially as there is no certainty as to the exact species of plants to which it belongs, although Grimm identifies it with the *Euphorbia lathyris*. At any rate, it is chiefly procurable by the woodpecker—a lightning-bearer; and to secure this much-prized treasure, its nest must be stopped up, access to which it will quickly gain by touching it with the springwort. But if one have in readiness a pan of water, a fire, or a red cloth, the bird will let the plant fall, which otherwise it would be a difficult work to obtain, "the

notion, no doubt, being that the bird must return the mystic plant to the element from which it springs, that being either the water of the clouds or the lightning fire enclosed therein." [11]

Professor Gubernatis, referring to the symbolical nature of this tradition, remarks that, "this herb may be the moon itself, which opens the hiding-place of the night, or the thunderbolt, which opens the hiding-places of the cloud." According to the Swiss version of the story it is the hoopoe that brings the spring-wort, a bird also endowed with mystic virtues, [12] while in Iceland, Normandy, and ancient Greece it is an eagle, a swallow, or an ostrich. Analogous to the talismanic properties of the springwort are those of the famous luck or key-flower of German folk-lore, by the discovery of which the fortunate possessor effects an entrance into otherwise inaccessible fairy haunts, where unlimited treasures are offered for his acceptance. There then, again, the luck-flower is no doubt intended to denote the lightning, which reveals strange treasures, giving water to the parched and thirsty land, and, as Mr. Fiske remarks, "making plain what is doing under cover of darkness." [13] The lightning-flash, too, which now and then, as a lesson of warning, instantly strikes dead those who either rashly or presumptuously essay to enter its awe-inspiring portals, is exemplified in another version of the same legend. A shepherd, while leading his flock over the Ilsentein, pauses to rest, but immediately the mountain opens by reason of the springwort or luck-flower in the staff on which he leans. Within the cavern a white lady appears, who invites him to accept as much of her wealth as he chooses. Thereupon he fills his pockets, and hastening to quit her mysterious domains, he heeds not her enigmatical warning, "Forget not the best," the result being that as he passes through the door he is severed in twain amidst the crashing of thunder. Stories of this kind, however, are the exception, legendary lore generally regarding the lightning as a benefactor rather than a destroyer. "The lightning-flash," to quote Mr. Baring-Gould's words, "reaches the barren, dead, and thirsty land; forth gush the waters of heaven, and the parched vegetation bursts once more into the vigour of life restored after suspended animation."

That this is the case we have ample proof in the myths relating to plants, in many of which the life-giving properties of the lightning are clearly depicted. Hence, also, the extraordinary healing properties which are ascribed to the various lightning plants. Ash rods, for instance, are still used in many parts of England for the cure of diseased sheep, cows, and horses, and in Cornwall, as a remedy for hernia, children are passed through holes in ash trees. The mistletoe has the reputation of being an antidote for poisons and a specific against epilepsy. Culpepper speaks of it as a sure panacea for apoplexy, palsy, and falling sickness, a belief current in Sweden, where finger rings are made of its wood. An old-

fashioned charm for the bite of an adder was to place a cross formed of hazel-wood on the wound, and the burning of a thorn-bush has long been considered a sure preventive of mildew in wheat. Without multiplying further illustrations, there can be no doubt that the therapeutic virtues of these so-called lightning plants may be traced to, in very many cases, their mythical origin. It is not surprising too that plants of this stamp should have been extensively used as charms against the influences of occult powers, their symbolical nature investing them with a potency such as was possessed by no ordinary plant.

Footnotes:

1. See an article on "Myths of the Fire Stealer," *Saturday Review*, June 2, 1883, p. 689; Tylor's "Primitive Culture."
2. "Myths and Myth Makers," p. 55.
3. See Keary's "Outlines of Primitive Belief," 1882, p. 98.
4. "Indo-European Tradition and Folk-lore," p. 159.
5. "Mystic Trees and Shrubs," *Fraser's Magazine*, Nov. 1870, p. 599.
6. "Sacred Trees and Flowers," *Quarterly Review*, July 1863, pp. 231, 232.
7. "Myths and Myth Makers," p. 55.
8. See "Flower Lore," pp. 38, 39.
9. Kelly's "Indo-European Folk-lore," p. 179.
10. "Natural History and Antiquities of Surrey," ii. 34.
11. Kelly's "Indo-European Folk-lore," p. 176; Grimm's "Teutonic Mythology," 1884, chap. xxxii.; Gubernatis' "Zoological Mythology," ii. 266-7.
12. See Albertus Magnus, "De Mirab. Mundi," 1601, p. 225.
13. Gubernatis' "Zoological Mythology," ii. 230.
14. "Myths and Mythmakers," p. 58.
15. See Baring-Gould's "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," 1877, pp. 386-416.
16. Folkard's "Plant-lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 460.
17. See Kelly's "Indo-European Folk-lore," pp. 47-48.

CHAPTER V.

PLANTS IN WITCHCRAFT.

The vast proportions which the great witchcraft movement assumed in bygone years explains the magic properties which we find ascribed to so many plants in most countries. In the nefarious trade carried on by the representatives of this cruel system of sorcery certain plants were largely employed for working marvels, hence the mystic character which they have ever since retained. It was necessary, however, that these should be plucked at certain phases of the moon or seasons of the year, or from some spot where the sun was supposed not to have shone on it.[1] Hence Shakespeare makes one of his witches speak of "root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark," and of "slips of yew sliver'd in the moon's eclipse," a practice which was long kept up. The plants, too, which formed the witches' pharmacopoeia, were generally selected either from their legendary associations or by reason of their poisonous and soporific qualities. Thus, two of those most frequently used as ingredients in the mystic cauldron were the vervain and the rue, these plants having been specially credited with supernatural virtues. The former probably derived its notoriety from the fact of its being sacred to Thor, an honour which marked it out, like other lightning plants, as peculiarly adapted for occult uses. It was, moreover, among the sacred plants of the Druids, and was only gathered by them, "when the dog-star arose, from unsunned spots." At the same time, it is noteworthy that many of the plants which were in repute with witches for working their marvels were reckoned as counter-charms, a fact which is not surprising, as materials used by wizards and others for magical purposes have generally been regarded as equally efficacious if employed against their charms and spells.[2] Although vervain, therefore, as the "enchanters' plant," was gathered by witches to do mischief in their incantations, yet, as Aubrey says, it "hinders witches from their will," a circumstance to which Drayton further refers when he speaks of the vervain as "'gainst witchcraft much avayling." Rue, likewise, which entered so largely into magic rites, was once much in request as an antidote against such practices; and nowadays, when worn on the person in conjunction with agrimony, maiden-hair, broom-straw, and ground ivy, it is said in the Tyrol to confer fine vision, and to point out the presence of witches.

It is still an undecided question as to why rue should out of all other plants have gained its widespread reputation with witches, but M. Maury supposes that it was on account of its being a narcotic and causing hallucinations. At any rate, it seems to have acquired at an early

period in this country a superstitious reverence, for, as Mr. Conway says,[3] "We find the missionaries sprinkling holy water from brushes made of it, whence it was called 'herb of grace'."

Respecting the rendezvous of witches, it may be noted that they very frequently resorted to hills and mountains, their meetings taking place "on the mead, on the oak sward, under the lime, under the oak, at the pear tree." Thus the fairy rings which are often to be met with on the Sussex downs are known as hag-tracks,[4] from the belief that "they are caused by hags and witches, who dance there at midnight." [5] Their love for sequestered and romantic localities is widely illustrated on the Continent, instances of which have been collected together by Grimm, who remarks how "the fame of particular witch mountains extends over wide kingdoms." According to a tradition current in Friesland,[6] no woman is to be found at home on a Friday, because on that day they hold their meetings and have dances on a barren heath. Occasionally, too, they show a strong predilection for certain trees, to approach which as night-time draws near is considered highly dangerous. The Judas tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*) was one of their favourite retreats, perhaps on account of its traditionary association with the apostle. The Neapolitan witches held their tryst under a walnut tree near Benevento,[7] and at Bologna the peasantry tell how these evil workers hold a midnight meeting beneath the walnut trees on St. John's Eve. The elder tree is another haunt under whose branches witches are fond of lurking, and on this account caution must be taken not to tamper with it after dark.[8] Again, in the Netherlands, experienced shepherds are careful not to let their flocks feed after sunset, for there are wicked elves that prepare poison in certain plants--nightwort being one of these. Nor does any man dare to sleep in a meadow or pasture after sunset, for, as the shepherds say, he would have everything to fear. A Tyrolese legend[9] relates how a boy who had climbed a tree, "overlooked the ghastly doings of certain witches beneath its boughs. They tore in pieces the corpse of a woman, and threw the portions in the air. The boy caught one, and kept it by him; but the witches, on counting the pieces, found that one was missing, and so replaced it by a scrap of alderwood, when instantly the dead came to life again."

Similarly, also, they had their favourite flowers, one having been the foxglove, nicknamed "witches' bells," from their decorating their fingers with its blossoms; while in some localities the hare-bell is designated the "witches' thimble." On the other hand, flowers of a yellow or greenish hue were distasteful to them.[10]

In the witchcraft movement it would seem that certain plants were in requisition for particular purposes, these workers of darkness having utilised the properties of herbs to special ends. A plant was not indiscriminately selected, but on account of possessing some virtue as to

render it suitable for any design that the witches might have in view. Considering, too, how multitudinous and varied were their actions, they had constant need of applying to the vegetable world for materials with which to carry out their plans. But foremost amongst their requirements was the power of locomotion wherewith to enable them with supernatural rapidity to travel from one locality to another. Accordingly, one of their most favourite vehicles was a besom or broom, an implement which, it has been suggested, from its being a type of the winds, is an appropriate utensil "in the hands of the witches, who are windmakers and workers in that element.[11]" According to the Asiatic Register for 1801, the Eastern as well as the European witches "practise their spells by dancing at midnight, and the principal instrument they use on such occasions is a broom." Hence, in Hamburg, sailors, after long toiling against a contrary wind, on meeting another ship sailing in an opposite direction, throw an old broom before the vessel, believing thereby to reverse the wind.[12] As, too, in the case of vervain and rue, the besom, although dearly loved by witches, is still extensively used as a counter-charm against their machinations—it being a well-known belief both in England and Germany that no individual of this stamp can step over a besom laid inside the threshold. Hence, also, in Westphalia, at Shrovetide, white besoms with white handles are tied to the cows' horns; and, in the rites connected with the Midsummer fires kept up in different parts of the country, the besom holds a prominent place. In Bohemia, for instance, the young men collect for some weeks beforehand as many worn-out brooms as they can lay their hands on. These, after dipping in tar, they light--running with them from one bonfire to another--and when burnt out they are placed in the fields as charms against blight.[13] The large ragwort--known in Ireland as the "fairies' horse"--has long been sought for by witches when taking their midnight journeys. Burns, in his "Address to the Deil," makes his witches "skim the muirs and dizzy crags" on "rag-bred nags" with "wicked speed." The same legendary belief prevails in Cornwall, in connection with the Castle Peak, a high rock to the south of the Logan stone. Here, writes Mr. Hunt,[14] "many a man, and woman too, now quietly sleeping in the churchyard of St. Levan, would, had they the power, attest to have seen the witches flying into the Castle Peak on moonlight nights, mounted on the stems of the ragwort." Amongst other plants used for a similar purpose were the bulrush and reed, in connection with-which may be quoted the Irish tale of the rushes and cornstalks that "turn into horses the moment you bestride them[15]." In Germany[16] witches were said to use hay for transporting themselves through the air.

When engaged in their various occupations they often considered it expedient to escape detection by assuming invisibility, and for this object sought the assistance of certain plants, such as the fern-seed[17]. In

Sweden, hazel-nuts were supposed to have the power of making invisible, and it may be remembered how in one of Andersen's stories the elfin princess has the faculty of vanishing at will, by putting a wand in her mouth.[18] But these were not the only plants supposed to confer invisibility, for German folk-lore tells us how the far-famed luck-flower was endowed with the same wonderful property; and by the ancients the heliotrope was credited with a similar virtue, but which Boccaccio, in his humorous tale of Calandrino in the "Decameron," applies to the so-called stone. "Heliotrope is a stone of such extraordinary virtue that the bearer of it is effectually concealed from the sight of all present."

Dante in his "Inferno," xxiv. 92, further alludes to it:

*"Amid this dread exuberance of woe
Ran naked spirits winged with horrid fear,
Nor hope had they of crevice where to hide,
Or heliotrope to charm them out of view."*

In the same way the agate was said to render a person invisible, and to turn the swords of foes against themselves.[19] The Swiss peasants affirm that the Ascension Day wreaths of the amaranth make the wearer invisible, and in the Tyrol the mistletoe is credited with this property.

But some plants, as we have already pointed out, were credited with the magic property of revealing the presence of witches, and of exposing them engaged in the pursuit of plying their nefarious calling. In this respect the St. John's wort was in great request, and hence it was extensively worn as an amulet, especially in Germany on St. John's Eve, a time when not only witches by common report peopled the air, but evil spirits wandered about on no friendly errand. Thus the Italian name of "devil-chaser," from the circumstance of its scaring away the workers of darkness, by bringing their hidden deeds to light. This, moreover, accounts for the custom so prevalent in most European countries of decorating doorways and windows with its blossoms on St. John's Eve. In our own country Stowe[20] speaks of it as its having been placed over the doors together with green birch, fennel, orpine, and white lilies, whereas in France the peasantry still reverence it as dispersing every kind of unseen evil influence. The elder was invested with similar properties, which seem to have been more potent than even those attributed to the St. John's wort. According to an old tradition, any baptized person whose eyes were anointed with the green juice of its inner bark could see witches in any part of the world. Hence the tree was extremely obnoxious to witches, a fact which probably accounts for its having been so often planted near cottages. Its magic influence has also caused it to be introduced into various rites, as in Styria on Bertha Night (January 6th), when the devil goes about in great force.[21] As a

safeguard, persons are recommended to make a magic circle, in the centre of which they should stand with elder-berries gathered on St. John's Night. By so doing the mystic fern seed may be obtained, which possesses the strength of thirty or forty men. In Germany, too, a species of wild radish is said to reveal witches, as also is the ivy, and saxifrage enables its bearer to see witches on Walpurgis Night.

But, in spite of plants of this kind, witches somehow or other contrived to escape detection by the employment of the most subtle charms and spells. They generally, too, took the precaution of avoiding such plants as were antagonistic to them, displaying a cunning ingenuity in most of their designs which it was by no means easy to forestall. Hence in the composition of their philtres and potions they infused the juices of the most deadly herbs, such as that of the nightshade or monkshood; and to add to the potency of these baleful draughts they considered it necessary to add as many as seven or nine of the most poisonous plants they could obtain, such, for instance, as those enumerated by one of the witches in Ben Jonson's "Masque of Queens," who says:--

*"And I ha' been plucking plants among
Hemlock, Henbane, Adder's Tongue;
Nightshade, Moonwort, Libbard's bane,
And twice, by the dogs, was like to be ta'en."*

Another plant used by witches in their incantations was the sea or horned poppy, known in mediaeval times as *Ficus infernalis*; hence it is further noticed by Ben Jonson in the "Witches' Song":

*"Yes, I have brought to help our vows,
Horned poppy, cypress boughs,
The fig tree wild that grows on tombs,
And juice that from the larch tree comes."*

Then, of course, there was the wondrous moonwort (*Botrychium lunaria*), which was doubly valuable from its mystic virtue, for, as Culpepper[22] tells us, it was believed to open locks and possess other magic virtues. The mullein, popularly termed the hag-taper, was also in request, and the honesty (*Lunaria biennis*), "in sorceries excelling," was equally employed. By Scotch witches the woodbine was a favourite plant,[23] who, in effecting magical cures, passed their patients nine times through a girth or garland of green woodbine.

Again, a popular means employed by witches of injuring their enemies was by the briony. Coles, in his "Art of Simpling," for instance, informs us how, "they take likewise the roots of mandrake, according to

some, or, as I rather suppose, the roots of briony, which simple folk take for the true mandrake, and make thereof an ugly image, by which they represent the person on whom they intend to exercise their witchcraft." And Lord Bacon, speaking of the mandrake, says--"Some plants there are, but rare, that have a mossie or downy root, and likewise that have a number of threads, like beards, as mandrakes, whereof witches and impostours make an ugly image, giving it the form of a face at the top of the root, and leave those strings to make a broad beard down to the foot." The witchcraft literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries contains numerous allusions to the diabolical practice--a superstition immortalised by Shakespeare. The mandrake, from its supposed mysterious character, was intimately associated with witches, and Ben Jonson, in his "Masque of Queens," makes one of the hags who has been gathering this plant say,

*"I last night lay all alone
On the ground, to hear the mandrake groan;
And plucked him up, though he grew full low,
And, as I had done, the cock did crow."*

We have already incidentally spoken of the vervain, St. John's wort, elder, and rue as antagonistic to witchcraft, but to these may be added many other well-known plants, such as the juniper, mistletoe, and blackthorn. Indeed, the list might be greatly extended--the vegetable kingdom having supplied in most parts of the world almost countless charms to counteract the evil designs of these malevolent beings. In our own country the little pimpernel, herb-paris, and cyclamen were formerly gathered for this purpose, and the angelica was thought to be specially noisome to witches. The snapdragon and the herb-betony had the reputation of averting the most subtle forms of witchcraft, and dill and flax were worn as talismans against sorcery. Holly is said to be antagonistic to witches, for, as Mr. Folkard[24] says, "in its name they see but another form of the word 'holy,' and its thorny foliage and blood-red berries are suggestive of the most Christian associations." Then there is the rowan-tree or mountain-ash, which has long been considered one of the most powerful antidotes against works of darkness of every kind, probably from its sacred associations with the worship of the Druids. Hence it is much valued in Scotland, and the following couplet, of which there are several versions, still embodies the popular faith:

*"Rowan-tree and red thread,
Put the witches to their speed."*

But its fame has not been confined to any one locality, and as far south as Cornwall the peasant, when he suspects that his cow has been "overlooked," twists an ashen twig round its horns. Indeed, so potent is the ash as a counter charm to sorcery, that even the smallest twig renders their actions impotent; and hence, in an old ballad entitled "Laidley Wood," in the "Northumberland Garland," it is said:

*"The spells were vain, the hag returned
To the queen in sorrowful mood,
Crying that witches have no power,
Where there is row'n-tree wood."*

Hence persons carry an ashen twig in their pocket, and according to a Yorkshire proverb:

*"If your whipsticks made of row'n,
You may ride your nag through any town;"*

But, on the other hand, "Woe to the lad without a rowan-tree gall." Possessed of such virtues, it is not surprising that the mystic ash should have been held in the highest repute, in illustration of which we find many an amusing anecdote. Thus, according to a Herefordshire tradition, some years ago two hogsheads full of money were concealed in an underground cellar belonging to the Castle of Penyard, where they were kept by supernatural force. A farmer, however, made up his mind to get them out, and employed for the purpose twenty steers to draw down the iron door of the vault. On the door being slightly opened, a jackdaw was seen sitting on one of the casks, but the door immediately closed with a bang--a voice being heard to say,

*"Had it not been
For your quicken tree goad,
And your yew tree pin,
You and your cattle
Had all been drawn in."*

Another anecdote current in Yorkshire is interesting, showing how fully superstitions of this kind are believed[25]:--"A woman was lately in my shop, and in pulling out her purse brought out also a piece of stick a few inches long. I asked her why she carried that in her pocket. 'Oh,' she replied, 'I must not lose that, or I shall be done for.' 'Why so?' I inquired. 'Well,' she answered, 'I carry that to keep off the witches; while I have that about me, they cannot hurt me.' On my adding that there were no witches nowadays, she instantly replied, 'Oh, yes! There are thirteen at

this very time in the town, but so long as I have my rowan-tree safe in my pocket they cannot hurt me."

Occasionally when the dairymaid churned for a long time without making butter, she would stir the cream with a twig of mountain ash, and beat the cow with another, thus breaking the witch's spell. But, to prevent accidents of this kind, it has long been customary in the northern countries to make the churn-staff of ash. For the same reason herd-boys employ an ash-twig for driving cattle, and one may often see a mountain-ash growing near a house. On the Continent the tree is in equal repute, and in Norway and Denmark rowan branches are usually put over stable doors to keep out witches, a similar notion prevailing in Germany. No tree, perhaps, holds such a prominent place in witchcraft-lore as the mountain-ash, its mystic power having rarely failed to render fruitless the evil influence of these enemies of mankind.

In our northern counties witches are said to dislike the bracken fern, "because it bears on its root the initial C, which may be seen on cutting the root horizontally." [26] and in most places equally distasteful to them is the yew, perhaps for no better reason than its having formerly been much planted in churchyards. The herb-bennett (*Geum urbanum*), like the clover, from its trefoiled leaf, renders witches powerless, and the hazel has similar virtues. Among some of the plants considered antagonistic to sorcery on the Continent may be mentioned the water-lily, which is gathered in the Rhine district with a certain formula. In Tuscany, the lavender counteracts the evil eye, and a German antidote against the hurtful effects of any malicious influence was an ointment made of the leaves of the marsh-mallow. In Italy, an olive branch which has been blessed keeps the witch from the dwelling, and in some parts of the Continent the plum-tree is used. Kolb, writes Mr. Black, [27] who became one of the first "wonder-doctors" of the Tyrol, "when he was called to assist any bewitched person, made exactly at midnight the smoke of five different sorts of herbs, and while they were burning the bewitched was gently beaten with a martyr-thorn birch, which had to be got the same night. This beating the patient with thorn was thought to be really beating the hag who had caused the evil."

Some seasons, too, have been supposed to be closely associated with the witches, as in Germany, where all flax must be spun before Twelfth Night, for one who spins afterwards is liable to be bewitched.

Lastly, to counteract the spell of the evil eye, from which many innocent persons were believed to suffer in the witchcraft period, many flowers have been in requisition among the numerous charms used. Thus, the Russian maidens still hang round the stem of the birch-tree red ribbon, the Brahmans gather rice, and in Italy rue is in demand. The Scotch peasantry pluck twigs of the ash, the Highland women the groundsel, and the German folk wear the radish. In early times the

ringwort was recommended by Apuleius, and later on the fern was regarded as a preservative against this baneful influence. The Chinese put faith in the garlic; and, in short, every country has its own special plants. It would seem, too, that after a witch was dead and buried, precautionary measures were taken to frustrate her baneful influence. Thus, in Russia, aspen is laid on a witch's grave, the dead sorceress being then prevented from riding abroad.

Footnotes:

1. See Moncure Conway's "Demonology and Devil Lore," 1880, ii. 324. 2. See Friend's "Flower Lore," ii. 529-30. 3. "Demonology and Devil Lore," ii. 324. 4. Grimm, "Teutonic Mythology," 1883, iii. 1051. 5. Folkard's "Plant Lore, Legends, and Lyrics," 1884, p. 91. 6. Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," iii. 19. 7. Grimm's "Teutonic Mythology," iii. 1052. 8. See Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," iii. 267. 9. See Folkard's "Plant Lore, Legends, and Lyrics," p. 209. 10. *Ibid.*, p. 104. 11. See Kelly's "Indo-European Folk-lore," pp. 225-7. 12. See Hardwick's "Traditions, Superstitions, and Folk-lore," p. 117; also Grimm's "Teutonic Mythology," 1883, iii. 1083. 13. See Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," 1852, iii. 21, 137. 14. "Popular Romances of the West of England," 1871, p. 330. 15. Grimm's "Teutonic Mythology," iii. 1084. 16. See Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," iii. 208-9. 17. See chap. "Doctrine of Signatures." 18. See Yardley's "Supernatural in Romantic Fiction," 1880, pp. 131-2. 19. See Fiske, "Myths and Mythmakers," p. 44; also Baring-Gould's "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," 1877, p. 398. 20. "Survey of London." See Mason's "Folk-lore of British Plants" in *Dublin University Magazine*, September 1873, p. 326-8. 21. Mr. Conway's "Mystic Trees and Flowers," *Fraser's Magazine*, 1870, 602. 22. "British Herbal." 23. See Folkard's "Plant-lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 380. 24. "Plant-lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 376. 25. Henderson's "Folk-lore of Northern Counties," 1879, p. 225. 26. "Folk-lore of Northern Counties," 1879. 27. "Folk-medicine," p. 202.

CHAPTER VI.

PLANTS IN DEMONOLOGY.

The association of certain plants with the devil forms an extensive and important division in their folk-lore, and in many respects is closely connected with their mystic history. It is by no means easy always to account for some of our most beautiful flowers having Satanic surroundings, although frequently the explanation must be sought in their poisonous and deadly qualities. In some cases, too, the student of comparative mythology may trace their evil reputation to those early traditions which were the expressions of certain primitive beliefs, the survivals of which nowadays are found in many an apparently meaningless superstition. Anyhow, the subject is a very wide one, and is equally represented in most countries. It should be remembered, moreover, that rudimentary forms of dualism--the antagonism of a good and evil deity[1]--have from a remote period occupied men's minds, a system of belief known even among the lower races of mankind. Hence, just as some plants would in process of time acquire a sacred character, others would do the reverse. Amongst the legendary stories and folktales of most countries we find frequent allusion to the devil as an active agent in utilising various flowers for his mischievous pursuits; and on the Continent we are told of a certain evil spirit named *Kleure* who transforms himself into a tree to escape notice, a superstition which under a variety of forms still lingers here and there.[2] It would seem, too, that in some of our old legends and superstitions the terms Puck and Devil are synonymous, a circumstance which explains the meaning, otherwise unintelligible, of many items of plant-lore in our own and other countries. Thus the word "Puck" has been identified with *Pogge* -- toad, under which form the devil was supposed to be personified; and hence probably originated such expressions as toadstools, paddock-stools, &c. The thorns of the eglantine are said to point downwards, because when the devil was excluded from heaven he tried to regain his lost position by means of a ladder composed of its thorns. But when the eglantine was only allowed to grow as a bush, out of spite he placed its thorns in their present eccentric position. The seed of the parsley, "is apt to come up only partially, according as the devil takes his tithe of it." [3] In Germany "devil's oaks" are of frequent occurrence, and "one of these at Gotha is held in great regard." [4] and Gerarde, describing the vervain, with its manifold mystic virtues, says that "the devil did reveal it as a secret and divine medicine." Belladonna, writes Mr. Conway, is esteemed in Bohemia a favourite plant of the devil, who watches it, but

may be drawn from it on Walpurgis Night by letting loose a black hen, after which he will run. Then there is the sow-thistle, which in Russia is said to belong to the devil; and Loki, the evil spirit in northern mythology, is occasionally spoken of as sowing weeds among the good seed; from whence, it has been suggested, originated the popular phrase of "sowing one's wild oats." [5] The German peasantry have their "rye-wolf," a malignant spirit infesting the rye-fields; and in some parts of the Continent orchards are said to be infested by evil demons, who, until driven away by various incantations, are liable to do much harm to the fruit. The Italians, again, affirm that in each leaf of the fig-tree an evil spirit dwells; and throughout the Continent there are various other demons who are believed to haunt the crops. Evil spirits were once said to lurk in lettuce-beds, and a certain species was regarded with ill favour by mothers, a circumstance which, Mr. Folkard rightly suggests, [6] may account for a Surrey saying, "O'er much lettuce in the garden will stop a young wife's bearing." Among similar legends of the kind it is said that, in Swabia, fern-seed brought by the devil between eleven and twelve o'clock on Christmas night enables the bearer to do as much work as twenty or thirty ordinary men. According to a popular piece of superstition current in our southern counties, the devil is generally supposed to put his cloven foot upon the blackberries on Michaelmas Day, and hence after this date it is considered unlucky to gather them during the remainder of the year. An interesting instance of this superstition is given by Mrs. Latham in her "West Sussex Superstitions," which happened to a farmer's wife residing in the neighbourhood of Arundel. It appears that she was in the habit of making a large quantity of blackberry jam, and finding that less fruit had been brought to her than she required, she said to the charwoman, "I wish you would send some of your children to gather me three or four pints more." "Ma'am," exclaimed the woman in astonishment, "don't you know this is the 11th October?" "Yes," she replied. "Bless me, ma'am! And you ask me to let my children go out blackberrying! Why, I thought every one knew that the devil went round on the 10th October, and spat on all the blackberries, and that if any person were to eat on the 11th, he or some one belonging to him would either die or fall into great trouble before the year was out."

In Scotland the devil is said to but throw his cloak over the blackberries and render them unwholesome, while in Ireland he is said to stamp on them. Among further stories of this kind may be quoted one current in Devonshire respecting St. Dunstan, who, it is said, bought up a quantity of barley for brewing beer. The devil, knowing how anxious the saint would be to get a good sale for his beer, offered to blight the apple trees, so that there should be no cider, and hence a greater demand for beer, on condition that he sold himself to him. St. Dunstan accepted

the offer, and stipulated that the trees should be blighted on the 17th, 18th, and 19th May. Should the apple-blossom be nipped by cold winds or frost about this time, many allusions are still made to St. Dunstan.

Of the plants associated personally with the evil one may be mentioned the henbane, which is known in Germany as the "devil's eye," a name applied to the stich-wort in Wales. A species of ground moss is also styled in Germany the "devil's claws;" one of the orchid tribe is "Satan's hand;" the lady's fingers is "devil's claws," and the plantain is "devil's head." Similarly the house-leek has been designated the "devil's beard," and a Norfolk name for the stinkhorn is "devil's horn." Of further plants related to his Satanic majesty is the clematis, termed "devil's thread," the toad-flax is his ribbon, the indigo his dye, while the scandix forms his darning-needles. The tritoma, with its brilliant red blossom, is familiar in most localities as the "devil's poker," and the ground ivy has been nicknamed the "devil's candlestick," the mandrake supplying his candle. The puff-balls of the lycoperdon form the devil's snuff-box, and in Ireland the nettle is his apron, and the convolvulus his garter; while at Iserlohn, in Germany,[7] "the mothers, to deter their children eating the mulberries, sing to them that the devil requires them for the purpose of blacking his boots." The *Arum maculatum* is "devil's ladies and gentlemen," and the *Ranunculus arvensis* is the "devil on both sides." The vegetable kingdom also has been equally mindful of his majesty's food, the spurge having long been named "devil's milk" and the briony the "devil's cherry." A species of fungus, known with us as "witches' butter," is called in Sweden "devil's butter," while one of the popular names for the mandrake is "devil's food." The hare-parsley supplies him with oatmeal, and the stichwort is termed in the West of England "devil's corn." Among further plants associated with his Satanic majesty may be enumerated the garden fennel, or love-in-a-mist, to which the name of "devil-in-a-bush" has been applied, while the fruit of the deadly nightshade is commonly designated "devil's berries." Then there is the "devil's tree," and the "devil's dung" is one of the nicknames of the *assafoetida*. The hawk-weed, like the scabious, was termed "devil's bit," because the root looks as if it had been bitten off. According to an old legend, "the root was once longer, until the devil bit away the rest for spite, for he needed it not to make him sweat who is always tormented with fear of the day of judgment." Gerarde further adds that, "The devil did bite it for envy, because it is an herb that hath so many great virtues, and is so beneficial to mankind." A species of *ranunculus* supplies his coach-wheels, and in some parts of the country ferns are said to supply his brushes. His majesty's wants, therefore, have been amply provided for by the vegetable kingdom, for even the wild garlic affords him a posy[8]. Once more, in Sweden, a rose-coloured flower, known as "Our Lady's hand," "has two roots like hands, one white, the other black, and

when both are placed in water the black one will sink, this is called 'Satan's hand;' but the white one, called 'Mary's hand,' will float." [9] Hence this flower is held in deep and superstitious veneration among the peasantry; and in Crete the basil is considered an emblem of the devil, and is placed on most window-ledges, no doubt as a charm.

Some plants, again, have been used for exorcism from their reputed antagonism to all Satanic influence. Thus the avens or herb-bennett, when kept in a house, was believed to render the devil powerless, and the Greeks of old were in the habit of placing a laurel bough over their doorways to keep away evil spirits. The thistle has been long in demand for counteracting the powers of darkness, and in Esthonia it is placed on the ripening corn to drive and scare away malignant demons. In Poland, the disease known among the poorer classes as "elf-lock" is supposed to be the work of wicked spirits, but tradition says it will gradually disappear if one buries thistle seed. [10] The aloe, by the Egyptians, is reputed to resist any baleful influence, and the lunary or "honesty" is by our own country people said to put every evil influence to flight. In Germany the juniper disperses evil spirits, and in ancient times the black hellebore, peony, and mugwort were largely used for this purpose. According to a Russian belief the elder-tree drives away evil spirits, and hence this plant is held in high respect. Among further plants possessing the same quality are the nettle and milfoil, and then there is the famous St. John's wort, popularly nicknamed "devil's flight."

Closely allied with this part of our subject are those plants connected with serpents, here forming a very numerous class. Indeed, it was only natural that our ancestors, from their dread of the serpent on account of its poisonous sting, as well as from their antipathy to it as the symbol of evil, should ascertain those plants which seemed either attractive, or antagonistic, to this much-dreaded reptile. Accordingly certain plants, from being supposed to be distasteful to serpents, were much used as amulets to drive them away. Foremost among these may be mentioned the ash, to escape contact with which a serpent, it has been said, would even creep into the fire, in allusion to which Cowley thus writes:

"But that which gave more wonder than the rest, Within an ash a serpent built her nest And laid her eggs, when once to come beneath The very shadow of an ash was death."

Gerarde notices this curious belief, and tells us that, "the leaves of this tree are so great virtue against serpents that they dare not so much as touch the morning and evening shadows of the tree, but shun them afar off."

Hence ash-sap was a German remedy for serpent bites. Lucan, in his "Pharsalia" (915-921), has enumerated some of the plants burned for the purpose of expelling serpents:

*"Beyond the farthest tents rich fires they build,
That healthy medicinal odours yield,
There foreign galbanum dissolving fries,
And crackling flames from humble wallwort rise.
There tamarisk, which no green leaf adorns,
And there the spicy Syrian custos burns;
There centaury supplies the wholesome flame,
That from Therssalian Chiron takes its name;
The gummy larch tree, and the thapsos there,
Woundwort and maidenweed perfume the air,
There the long branches of the long-lived hart
With southernwood their odours strong impart,
The monsters of the land, the serpents fell,
Fly far away and shun the hostile smell."*

The smoke of the juniper was equally repellent to serpents, and the juice of dittany "drives away venomous beasts, and doth astonish them." In olden times, for serpent bites, agrimony, chamomile, and the fruit of the bramble, were held efficacious, and Gerarde recommends the root of the bugloss, "as it keepeth such from being stung as have drunk it before; the leaves and seeds do the same." On the other hand, some plants had the reputation of attracting serpents, one of these being the moneywort or creeping loosestrife, with which they were said to heal themselves when wounded. As far back as the time of Pliny serpents were supposed to be very fond of fennel, restoring to them their youth by enabling them to cast their old skins. There is a belief in Thuringia that the possession of fern seed causes the bearer to be pursued by serpents till thrown away; and, according to a curious Eussian proverb, "from all old trees proceeds either an owl or a devil," in reference, no doubt, to their often bare and sterile appearance.

Footnotes:

1. See Tylor's "Primitive Culture," ii. 316. 2. Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," iii. 193. 3. "Plant-lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 486. 4. Mr. Conway, Fraser's Magazine, 1870, p. 593. 5. Mr. Conway, Fraser's Magazine, 1870, p. 107. 6. "Plant-lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 411. 7. Folkard's "Plant-lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 448. 8. See Friend's "Flower-lore," i. 68. 9. Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," ii. 104. 10. "Mystic Trees and Flowers," Fraser's Magazine.

CHAPTER VII.

PLANTS IN FAIRY-LORE.

Many plants have gained a notoriety from their connection with fairyland, and although the belief in this romantic source of superstition has almost died out, yet it has left its traces in the numerous legends which have survived amongst us. Thus the delicate white flowers of the wood-sorrel are known in Wales as "fairy bells," from a belief once current that these tiny beings were summoned to their moonlight revels and gambols by these bells. In Ireland they were supposed to ride to their scenes of merrymaking on the ragwort, hence known as the "fairies' horse." Cabbage-stalks, too, served them for steeds, and a story is told of a certain farmer who resided at Dundaniel, near Cork, and was considered to be under fairy control. For a long time he suffered from "the falling sickness," owing to the long journeys which he was forced to make, night by night, with the fairy folk on one of his own cabbage stumps. Sometimes the good people made use of a straw, a blade of grass, or a fern, a further illustration of which is furnished by "The Witch of Fife:"

*"The first leet night, quhan the new moon set,
Quhan all was douffe and mirk,
We saddled our naigis wi' the moon-fern leif,
And rode fra Kilmerrin kirk.*

*Some horses were of the brume-cow framit,
And some of the greine bay tree;
But mine was made of ane humloke schaw,
And a stour stallion was he." [1]*

In some folk-tales fairies are represented as employing nuts for their mode of conveyance, in allusion to which Shakespeare, in "Romeo and Juliet," makes Mercutio speak of Queen Mab's arrival in a nut-shell. Similarly the fairies selected certain plants for their attire. Although green seems to have been their popular colour, yet the fairies of the moon were often clad in heath-brown or lichen-dyed garments, whence the epithet of "Elfin-grey." Their petticoats, for instance, were composed of the fox-glove, a flower in demand among Irish fairies for their gloves, and in some parts of that country for their caps, where it is nicknamed "Lusmore," while the *Cuscuta epithymum* is known in Jersey as "fairies' hair." Their raiment was made of the fairy flax, and the wood-anemone,

with its fragile blossoms, was supposed to afford them shelter in wet weather. Shakespeare has represented Ariel reclining in "a cowslip's bell," and further speaks of the small crimson drops in its blossom as "gold coats spots"--"these be rubies, fairy favours." And at the present day the cowslip is still known in Lincolnshire as the "fairy cup." Its popular German name is "key-flower;" and no flower has had in that country so extensive an association with preternatural wealth. A well-known legend relates how "Bertha" entices some favoured child by exquisite primroses to a doorway overgrown with flowers. This is the door to an enchanted castle. When the key-flower touches it, the door gently opens, and the favoured mortal passes to a room with vessels covered over with primroses, in which are treasures of gold and jewels. When the treasure is secured the primroses must be replaced, otherwise the finder will be for ever followed by a "black dog."

Sometimes their mantles are made of the gossamer, the cobwebs which may be seen in large quantities on the furze bushes; and so of King Oberon we are told:

*"A rich mantle did he wear,
Made of tinsel gossamer,
Bestarred over with a few
Diamond drops of morning dew."*

Tulips are the cradles in which the fairy tribe have lulled their offspring to rest, while the *Pyrus japonica* serves them for a fire.[2] Their hat is supplied by the *Peziza coccinea*; and in Lincolnshire, writes Mr. Friend,[3] "A kind of fungus like a cup or old-fashioned purse, with small objects inside, is called a fairy-purse." When mending their clothes, the foxglove gives them thimbles; and many other flowers might be added which are equally in request for their various needs. It should be mentioned, however, that fairies, like witches, have a strange antipathy to yellow flowers, and rarely frequent localities where they grow.

In olden times, we read how in Scandinavia and Germany the rose was under the special protection of dwarfs and elves, who were ruled by the mighty King Laurin, the lord of the rose-garden:

*"Four portals to the garden lead, and when the gates are closed,
No living might dare touch a rose, 'gainst his strict command opposed;
Whoe'er would break the golden gates, or cut the silken thread,
Or who would dare to crush the flowers down beneath his tread,
Soon for his pride would have to pledge a foot and hand;
Thus Laurin, king of Dwarfs, rules within his land."*

We may mention here that the beautiful white or yellow flowers that grow on the banks of lakes and rivers in Sweden are called "neck-roses," memorials of the Neck, a water-elf, and the poisonous root of the water-hemlock was known as neck-root.[4]

In Brittany and in some parts of Ireland the hawthorn, or, as it is popularly designated, the fairy-thorn, is a tree most specially in favour. On this account it is held highly dangerous to gather even a leaf "from certain old and solitary thorns which grow in sheltered hollows of the moorlands," for these are the trysting-places of the fairy race. A trace of the same superstition existed in Scotland, as may be gathered from the subjoined extract from the "Scottish Statistical Report" of the year 1796, in connection with New parish:--"There is a quick thorn of a very antique appearance, for which the people have a superstitious veneration. They have a mortal dread to lop off or cut any part of it, and affirm with a religious horror that some persons who had the temerity to hurt it, were afterwards severely punished for their sacrilege."

One flower which, for some reason or other, is still held in special honour by them, is the common stichwort of our country hedges, and which the Devonshire peasant hesitates to pluck lest he should be pixy-led. A similar idea formerly prevailed in the Isle of Man in connection with the St. John's wort. If any unwary traveller happened, after sunset, to tread on this plant, it was said that a fairy-horse would suddenly appear, and carry him about all night. Wild thyme is another of their favourite plants, and Mr. Folkard notes that in Sicily rosemary is equally beloved; and that "the young fairies, under the guise of snakes, lie concealed under its branches." According to a Netherlandish belief, the elf-leaf, or sorceresses' plant, is particularly grateful to them, and therefore ought not to be plucked.[5]

The four-leaved clover is a magic talisman which enables its wearer to detect the whereabouts of fairies, and was said only to grow in their haunts; in reference to which belief Lover thus writes:

*"I'll seek a four-leaved clover
In all the fairy dells,
And if I find the charmed leaf,
Oh, how I'll weave my spells!"*

And according to a Danish belief, any one wandering under an elder-bush at twelve o'clock on Midsummer Eve will see the king of fairyland pass by with all his retinue. Fairies' haunts are mostly in picturesque spots (such as among the tufts of wild thyme); and the oak tree, both here and in Germany, has generally been their favourite abode, and hence the superstitious reverence with which certain trees are held, care being taken not to offend their mysterious inhabitants.

An immense deal of legendary lore has clustered round the so-called fairy-rings--little circles of a brighter green in old pastures--within which the fairies were supposed to dance by night. This curious phenomenon, however, is owing to the outspread propagation of a particular mushroom, the fairy-ringed fungus, by which the ground is manured for a richer following vegetation.[6] Amongst the many other conjectures as to the cause of these verdant circles, some have ascribed them to lightning, and others have maintained that they are produced by ants.[7] In the "Tempest" (v. i) Prospero invokes the fairies as the "demi-puppets" that:

*"By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
Whereof the ewe not bites; and you, whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrooms."*

And in the "Merry Wives of Windsor" (v. 5) Mistress Quickly says:

*"And nightly, meadow-fairies, look, you sing,
Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring;
The expressure that it bears, green let it be,
More fertile-fresh than all the field to see."*

Drayton, in his "Nymphidia" (l. 69-72), tells how the fairies:

*"In their courses make that round,
In meadows and in marshes found,
Of them so called the fayrie ground,
Of which they have the keeping."*

These fairy-rings have long been held in superstitious awe; and when in olden times May-dew was gathered by young ladies to improve their complexion, they carefully avoided even touching the grass within them, for fear of displeasing these little beings, and so losing their personal charms. At the present day, too, the peasant asserts that no sheep nor cattle will browse on the mystic patches, a natural instinct warning them of their peculiar nature. A few miles from Alnwick was a fairy-ring, round which if people ran more than nine times, some evil was supposed to befall them.

It is generally agreed that fairies were extremely fond of dancing around oaks, and thus in addressing the monarch of the forest a poet has exclaimed:

*"The fairies, from their nightly haunt,
In copse or dell, or round the trunk revered
Of Herne's moon-silvered oak, shall chase away*

*Each fog, each blight, and dedicate to peace
Thy classic shade."*

In Sweden the miliary fever is said by the peasantry to be caused by the elf-mote or meeting with elves, as a remedy for which the lichen aphosus or lichen caninus is sought.

The toadstools often found near these so-called fairy-rings were also thought to be their workmanship, and in some localities are styled pixy-stools, and in the North of Wales "fairy-tables," while the "cheeses," or fruit of the mallow, are known in the North of England as "fairy-cheeses."

A species of wood fungus found about the roots of old trees is designated "fairy-butter," because after rain, and when in a certain degree of putrefaction, it is reduced to a consistency which, together with its colour, makes it not unlike butter. The fairy-butter of the Welsh is a substance found at a great depth in cavities of limestone rocks. Ritson, in his "Fairy Tales," speaking of the fairies who frequented many parts of Durham, relates how "a woman who had been in their society challenged one of the guests whom she espied in the market selling fairy-butter," an accusation, however, which was deeply resented.

Browne, in his "Britannia's Pastorals," makes the table on which they feast consist of:

*"A little mushroom, that was now grown thinner
By being one time shaven for the dinner."*

Fairies have always been jealous of their rights, and are said to resent any infringement of their privileges, one of these being the property of fruit out of season. Any apples, too, remaining after the crop has been gathered in, they claim as their own; and hence, in the West of England, to ensure their goodwill and friendship, a few stray ones are purposely left on the trees. This may partially perhaps explain the ill-luck of plucking flowers out of season[8]. A Netherlandish piece of folk-lore informs us that certain wicked elves prepare poison in some plants. Hence experienced shepherds are careful not to let their flocks feed after sunset. One of these plants, they say, is nightwort, "which belongs to the elves, and whoever touches it must die[9]." The disease known in Poland as "elf-lock" is said to be the work of evil fairies or demons, and is cured by burying thistle-seed in the ground. Similarly, in Iceland, says Mr. Conway, "the farmer guards the grass around his field lest the elves abiding in them invade his crops." Likewise the globe-flower has been designated the troll-flower, from the malignant trolls or elves, on account of its poisonous qualities. On the other hand, the Bavarian peasant has a notion that the elves are very fond of strawberries; and in order that they

may be good-humoured and bless his cows with abundance of milk, he is careful to tie a basket of this fruit between the cow's horns.

Of the many legendary origins of the fairy tribe, there is a popular one abroad that mortals have frequently been transformed into these little beings through "eating of ambrosia or some peculiar kind of herb." [10]

According to a Cornish tradition, the fern is in some mysterious manner connected with the fairies; and a tale is told of a young woman who, when one day listlessly breaking off the fronds of fern as she sat resting by the wayside, was suddenly confronted by a "fairy widower," who was in search of some one to attend to his little son. She accepted his offer, which was ratified by kissing a fern leaf and repeating this formula:

*"For a year and a day
I promise to stay."*

Soon she was an inhabitant of fairyland, and was lost to mortal gaze until she had fulfilled her stipulated engagement.

In Germany we find a race of elves, somewhat like the dwarfs, popularly known as the Wood or Moss people. They are about the same size as children, "grey and old-looking, hairy, and clad in moss." Their lives, like those of the Hamadryads, are attached to the trees; and "if any one causes by friction the inner bark to loosen a Wood-woman dies." [11] Their great enemy is the Wild Huntsman, who, driving invisibly through the air, pursues and kills them. On one occasion a peasant, hearing the weird baying in a wood, joined in the cry; but on the following morning he found hanging at his stable door a quarter of a green Moss-woman as his share of the game. As a spell against the Wild Huntsman, the Moss-women sit in the middle of those trees upon which the woodcutter has placed a cross, indicating that they are to be hewn, thereby making sure of their safety. Then, again, there is the old legend which tells how Brandan met a man on the sea, [12] who was, "a thumb long, and floated on a leaf, holding a little bowl in his right hand and a pointer in his left; the pointer he kept dipping into the sea and letting water drop from it into the bowl; when the bowl was full, he emptied it out and began filling it again, his doom consisting in measuring the sea until the judgment-day." This floating on the leaf is suggestive of ancient Indian myths, and reminds us of Brahma sitting on a lotus and floating across the sea. Vishnu, when, after Brahma's death, the waters have covered all the worlds, sits in the shape of a tiny infant on a leaf of the fig tree, and floats on the sea of milk sucking the toe of his right foot. [13]

Another tribe of water-fairies are the nixes, who frequently assume the appearance of beautiful maidens. On fine sunny days they sit on the

banks of rivers or lakes, or on the branches of trees, combing and arranging their golden locks:

*"Know you the Nixes, gay and fair?
Their eyes are black, and green their hair,
They lurk in sedgy shores."*

A fairy or water-sprite that resides in the neighbourhood of the Orkneys is popularly known as Tangie, so-called from tang,, the seaweed with which he is covered. Occasionally he makes his appearance as a little horse, and at other times as a man.[14]

Then there are the wood and forest folk of Germany, spirits inhabiting the forests, who stood in friendly relation to man, but are now so disgusted with the faithless world, that they have retired from it. Hence their precept--

*"Peel no tree,
Relate no dream,
Pipe no bread, or
Bake no cumin in bread,
So will God help thee in thy need."*

On one occasion a "forest-wife," who had just tasted a new baked-loaf, given as an offering, was heard screaming aloud:

*"They've baked for me cumin bread,
That on this house brings great distress."*

The prosperity of the poor peasant was soon on the wane, and before long he was reduced to abject poverty.[15] These legends, in addition to illustrating the fairy mythology of bygone years, are additionally interesting from their connection with the plants and flowers, most of which are familiar to us from our childhood.

Footnotes:

1. See Crofton Croker's "Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland," 1862, p. 98.
2. Folkard's "Plant-lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 30. 3. Friend, "Flowers and Flower Lore," p. 34. 4. Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," ii. 81-2. 5. Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," iii. 266.
6. See "The Phytologist," 1862, p. 236-8. 7. "Folk-lore of Shakespeare," p. 15. 8. See Friend's "Flower Lore," i. 34. 9. Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," iii. 266. 10. Friend's "Flower Lore," i. 27. 11. See Keightley's "Fairy Mythology," p. 231. 12. Grimm's "Teut. Myth.," 1883, ii. 451; 13. "Asiatic Researches," i. 345. 14. See Keightley's "Fairy Mythology," p. 173. 15. Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," i. 251-3.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE-CHARMS.

Plants have always been largely used for testing the fidelity of lovers, and at the present day are still extensively employed for this purpose by the rustic maiden. As in the case of medical charms, more virtue would often seem to reside in the mystic formula uttered while the flower is being secretly gathered, than in any particular quality of the flower itself. Then, again, flowers, from their connection with certain festivals, have been consulted in love matters, and elsewhere we have alluded to the knowledge they have long been supposed to give in dreams, after the performance of certain incantations. Turning to some of the well-known charm formulas, may be mentioned that known as "a clover of two," the mode of gathering it constituting the charm itself:

*"A clover, a clover of two,
Put it in your right shoe;
The first young man you meet,
In field, street, or lane,
You'll get him, or one of his name."*

Then there is the hempseed formula, and one founded on the luck of an apple-pip, which, when seized between the finger and thumb, is supposed to pop in the direction of the lover's abode; an illustration of which we subjoin as still used in Lancashire:

*"Pippin, pippin, paradise,
Tell me where my true love lies,
East, west, north, and south,
Pilling Brig, or Cocker Mouth."*

The old custom, too, of throwing an apple-peel over the head, marriage or single blessedness being foretold by its remaining whole or breaking, and of the peel so cast forming the initial of the future loved one, finds many adherents. Equally popular, too, was the practice of divining by a thistle blossom. When anxious to ascertain who loved her most, a young woman would take three or four heads of thistles, cut off their points, and assign to each thistle the name of an admirer, laying them under her pillow. On the following morning the thistle which has put forth a fresh sprout will denote the man who loves her most.

There are numerous charms connected with the ash-leaf, and among those employed in the North of England we may quote the following:

*"The even ash-leaf in my left hand,
The first man I meet shall be my husband;
The even ash-leaf in my glove,
The first I meet shall be my love;
The even ash-leaf in my breast,
The first man I meet's whom I love best;
The even ash-leaf in my hand,
The first I meet shall be my man.*

*Even ash, even ash, I pluck thee,
This night my true love for to see,
Neither in his rick nor in his rear,
But in the clothes he does every day wear."*

And there is the well-known saying current throughout the country:

*"If you find an even ash or a four-leaved clover,
Rest assured you'll see your true love ere the day is over."*

Longfellow alludes to the husking of the maize among the American colonists, an event which was always accompanied by various ceremonies, one of which he thus forcibly describes:

*"In the golden weather the maize was husked, and the maidens
Blushed at each blood-red ear, for that betokened a lover,
But at the crooked laughed, and called it a thief in the corn-field:
Even the blood-red ear to Evangeline brought not her lover."*

Charms of this kind are common, and vary in different localities, being found extensively on the Continent, where perhaps even greater importance is attached to them than in our own country. Thus, a popular French one--which many of our young people also practise--is for lovers to test the sincerity of their affections by taking a daisy and plucking its leaflets off one by one, saying, "Does he love me? -- a little--much--passionately--not at all!" the phrase which falls to the last leaflet forming the answer to the inquiry:

*"La blanche et simple Paquerette,
Que ton coeur consulte surtout,
Dit, Ton amant, tendre fillette,
T'aime, un peu, beaucoup, point du tout."*

Perhaps Brown alludes to the same species of divination when he writes of:

*"The gentle daisy with her silver crown,
Worn in the breast of many a shepherd lass."*

In England the marigold, which is carefully excluded from the flowers with which German maidens tell their fortunes as unfavourable to love, is often used for divination, and in Germany the star-flower and dandelion.

Among some of the ordinary flowers in use for love-divination may be mentioned the poppy, with its "prophetic leaf," and the old-fashioned "bachelor's buttons," which was credited with possessing some magical effect upon the fortunes of lovers. Hence its blossoms were carried in the pocket, success in love being indicated in proportion as they lost or retained their freshness. Browne alludes to the primrose, which "maidens as a true-love in their bosoms place;" and in the North of England the kemps or spikes of the ribwort plantain are used as love-charms. The mode of procedure as practised in Northamptonshire is thus picturesquely given by Clare in his "Shepherd's Calendar":

*"Or trying simple charms and spells,
Which rural superstition tells,
They pull the little blossom threads
From out the knotweed's button heads,
And put the husk, with many a smile,
In their white bosom for a while;*

*Then, if they guess aright the swain
Their love's sweet fancies try to gain,
'Tis said that ere it lies an hour,
'Twill blossom with a second flower,
And from the bosom's handkerchief
Bloom as it ne'er had lost a leaf."*

Then there are the downy thistle-heads, which the rustic maiden names after her lovers, in connection with which there are many old rhymes. Beans have not lost their popularity; and the leaves of the laurel still reveal the hidden fortune, having been also burnt in olden times by girls to win back their errant lovers.

The garden scene in "Faust" is a well-known illustration of the employment of the centaury or bluebottle for testing the faith of lovers, for Margaret selects it as the floral indication whence she may learn the truth respecting Faust:

*"And that scarlet poppies around like a bower,
The maiden found her mystic flower."*

*'Now, gentle flower, I pray thee tell
If my love loves, and loves me well;
So may the fall of the morning dew
Keep the sun from fading thy tender blue;
Now I remember the leaves for my lot--
He loves me not--he loves me--he loves me not--
He loves me! Yes, the last leaf--yes!
I'll pluck thee not for that last sweet guess;
He loves me!' 'Yes,' a dear voice sighed;
And her lover stands by Margaret's side."*

Another mode of love-divination formerly much practised among the lower orders was known as "peascod-wooing." The cook, when shelling green peas, would, if she chanced to find a pod having nine, lay it on the lintel of the kitchen-door, when the first man who happened to enter was believed to be her future sweetheart; an allusion to which is thus given by Gay:

*"As peascod once I pluck'd, I chanced to see
One that was closely fill'd with three times three,
Which, when I cropp'd, I safely home couvey'd,
And o'er the door the spell in secret laid.
The latch mov'd up, when who should first come in,
But, in his proper person, Lublerkin."*

On the other hand, it was customary in the North of England to rub a young woman with pease-straw should her lover prove unfaithful:

*"If you meet a bonnie lassie,
Gie her a kiss and let her gae;
If you meet a dirty hussey,
Fie, gae rub her o'er wi' strae!"*

From an old Spanish proverb it would seem that the rosemary has long been considered as in some way connected with love:

*"Who passeth by the rosemarie
And careth not to take a spraye,
For woman's love no care has he,
Nor shall he though he live for aye."*

Of flowers and plants employed as love-charms on certain festivals may be noticed the bay, rosebud, and the hempseed on St. Valentine's Day, nuts on St. Mark's Eve, and the St. John's wort on Midsummer Eve.

In Denmark[1] many an anxious lover places the St. John's wort between the beams under the roof for the purpose of divination, the

usual custom being to put one plant for herself and another for her sweetheart. Should these grow together, it is an omen of an approaching wedding. In Brittany young people prove the good faith of their lovers by a pretty ceremony. On St. John's Eve, the men, wearing bunches of green wheat ears, and the women decorated with flax blossoms, assemble round an old historic stone and place upon it their wreaths. Should these remain fresh for some time after, the lovers represented by them are to be united; but should they wither and die away, it is a certain proof that the love will as rapidly disappear. Again, in Sicily it is customary for young women to throw from their windows an apple into the street, which, should a woman pick up, it is a sign that the girl will not be married during the year. Sometimes it happens that the apple is not touched, a circumstance which indicates that the young lady, when married, will ere long be a widow. On this festival, too, the orpine or livelong has long been in request, popularly known as "Midsummer men," whereas in Italy the house-leek is in demand. The moss-rose, again, in years gone by, was plucked, with sundry formalities, on Midsummer Eve for love-divination, an allusion to which mode of forecasting the future, as practised in our own country, occurs in the poem of "The Cottage Girl:"

*"The moss-rose that, at fall of dew,
Ere eve its duskier curtain drew,
Was freshly gathered from its stem,
She values as the ruby gem;
And, guarded from the piercing air,
With all an anxious lover's care,
She bids it, for her shepherd's sake,
Awake the New Year's frolic wake:
When faded in its altered hue,
She reads--the rustic is untrue!
But if its leaves the crimson paint,
Her sick'ning hopes no longer faint;
The rose upon her bosom worn,
She meets him at the peep of morn."*

On the Continent the rose is still thought to possess mystic virtues in love matters, as in Thuringia, where girls foretell their future by means of rose-leaves.

A ceremony belonging to Hallowe'en is observed in Scotland with some trepidation, and consists in eating an apple before a looking-glass, when the face of the desired one will be seen. It is thus described by Burns:

*"Wee Jenny to her granny says,
'Will ye gae wi' me, granny?
I'll eat the apple at the glass
I gat frae uncle Johnny.'
She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
In wrath she was sae vap'rin,
She notic't na an aizle brunt
Her braw new worset apron
Out thro' that night.*

*'Ye little skelpie limmer's face!
I daur you try sic sportin'
As seek the foul thief ony place,
For him to spae your fortune;
Nae doubt but ye may get a sight!
Great cause ye hae to fear it,
For mony a ane has gotten a fright,
And lived and died deleeret
On sic a night.'"*

Hallowe'en also is still a favourite anniversary for all kinds of nut-charms, and St. Thomas was long invoked when the prophetic onion named after him was placed under the pillow. Rosemary and thyme were used on St. Agnes' Eve with this formula:

*"St. Agnes, that's to lovers kind,
Come, ease the troubles of my mind."*

In Austria, on Christmas Eve, apples are used for divination. According to Mr. Conway, the apple must be cut in two in the dark, without being touched, the left half being placed in the bosom, and the right laid behind the door. If this latter ceremony be carefully carried out, the desired one may be looked for at midnight near the right half. He further tells us that in the Erzgebirge, the maiden, having slept on St. Andrew's, or Christmas, night with an apple under her pillow, "takes her stand with it in her hand on the next festival of the Church thereafter; and the first man whom she sees, other than a relative, will become her husband."

Again, in Bohemia, on Christmas Eve, there is a pretty practice for young people to fix coloured wax-lights in the shells of the first nuts they have opened that day, and to float them in water, after silently assigning to each the name of some fancied wooer. He whose little barque is the first to approach the girl will be her future husband; but, on the other hand, should an unwelcome suitor seem likely to be the first, she blows against it, and so, by impeding its progress, allows the favoured barque to win.

In very early times flowers were much in request as love-philtres, various allusions to which occur in the literature of most ages. Thus, in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Oberon tells Puck to place a pansy on the eyes of Titania, in order that, on awaking, she may fall in love with the first object she encounters. Gerard speaks of the carrot as "serving for love matters," and adds that the root of the wild species is more effectual than that of the garden. Vervain has long been in repute as a love-philtre, and in Germany now-a-days endive-seed is sold for its supposed power to influence the affections. The root of the male fern was in years gone by used in love-philtres, and hence the following allusion:

*"'Twas the maiden's matchless beauty
That drew my heart a-nigh;
Not the fern-root potion,
But the glance of her blue eye."*

Then there is the basil with its mystic virtues, and the cumin-seed and cyclamen, which from the time of Theophrastus have been coveted for their magic virtues. The purslane, crocus, and periwinkle were thought to inspire love; while the agnus castus and the Saraca Indica (one of the sacred plants of India), a species of the willow, were supposed to drive away all feelings of love. Similarly in Voigtland, the common basil was regarded as a test of chastity, withering in the hands of the impure. The mandrake, which is still worn in France as a love-charm, was employed by witches in the composition of their philtres; and in Bohemia, it is said that if a maiden can secretly put a sprig of the common clover into her lover's shoe ere he sets out on a journey, he will be faithful to her during his absence. As far back as the time of Pliny, the water-lily was regarded as an antidote to the love-philtre, and the amaranth was used for curbing the affections. On the other hand, Our Lady's bedstraw and the mallow were supposed to have the reverse effect, while the myrtle not only created love, but preserved it. The Sicilians still employ hemp to secure the affections of those they love, and gather it with various formalities,[2] fully believing in its potency. Indeed, charms of this kind are found throughout the world, every country having its own special plants in demand for this purpose. However whimsical they may seem, they at any rate have the sanction of antiquity, and can claim an antecedent history certainly worthy of a better cause.

Footnotes:

1. Thorpe's "Northern Mythology." 2. Fraser's Magazine, 1870, p. 720.

CHAPTER IX.

DREAM-PLANTS.

The importance attached to dreams in all primitive and savage culture accounts for the significance ascribed to certain plants found by visitors to dreamland. At the outset, it may be noticed that various drugs and narcotic potions have, from time immemorial, been employed for producing dreams and visions--a process still in force amongst uncivilised tribes. Thus the Mundrucus of North Brazil, when desirous of gaining information on any special subject, would administer to their seers narcotic drinks, so that in their dreams they might be favoured with the knowledge required. Certain of the Amazon tribes use narcotic plants for encouraging visions, and the Californian Indians, writes Mr. Tylor,[1] "would give children narcotic potions, to gain from the ensuing visions information about their enemies;" whilst, he adds, "the Darien Indians used the seeds of the *Datura sanguinea* to bring on in children prophetic delirium, in which they revealed hidden treasure." Similarly, the Delaware medicine-men used to drink decoctions of an intoxicating nature, "until their minds became wildered, so that they saw extraordinary visions." [2]

The North American Indians also held intoxication by tobacco to be supernatural ecstasy. It is curious to find a survival of this source of superstition in modern European folk-lore. Thus, on the Continent, many a lover puts the four-leaved clover under his pillow to dream of his lady-love; and in our own country, daisy-roots are used by the rustic maiden for the same purpose. The Russians are familiar with a certain herb, known as the *son-trava*, a dream herb, which has been identified with the *Pulsatilla patens*, and is said to blossom in April, and to have an azure-coloured flower. When placed under the pillow, it will induce dreams, which are generally supposed to be fulfilled. It has been suggested that it was from its title of "tree of dreams" that the elm became a prophetic tree, having been selected by Virgil in the *Aeneid* (vi.) as the roosting-place of dreams in gloomy Orcus:

*"Full in the midst a spreading elm displayed
His aged arms, and cast a mighty shade;
Each trembling leaf with some light visions teems,
And leaves impregnated with airy dreams."*

At the present day, the yarrow or milfoil is used by love-sick maidens, who are directed to pluck the mystic plant from a young man's grave, repeating meanwhile this formula:

"Yarrow, sweet yarrow, the first that I have found, In the name of Jesus Christ I pluck it from the ground; As Jesus loved sweet Mary and took her for His dear, So in a dream this night I hope my true love will appear."

Indeed, many other plants are in demand for this species of love-divination, some of which are associated with certain days and festivals. In Sweden, for instance, "if on Midsummer night nine kinds of flowers are laid under the head, a youth or maiden will dream of his or her sweetheart."^[3] Hence in these simple and rustic love-charms may be traced similar beliefs as prevail among rude communities.

Again, among many of the American Indian tribes we find, according to Mr. Dorman,^[4] "a mythical tree or vine, which has a sacredness connected with it of peculiar significance, forming a connecting-link and medium of communication between the world of the living and the dead. It is generally used by the spirit as a ladder to pass downward and upward upon; the Ojibways having possessed one of these vines, the upper end of which was twined round a star." He further adds that many traditions are told of attempts to climb these heavenly ladders; and, "if a young man has been much favoured with dreams, and the people believe he has the art of looking into futurity, the path is open to the highest honours. The future prophet puts down his dreams in pictographs, and when he has a collection of these, if they prove true in any respect, then this record of his revelations is appealed to as proof of his prophetic power." But, without enumerating further instances of these savage dream-traditions, which are closely allied with the animistic theories of primitive culture, we would turn to those plants which modern European folk-lore has connected with dreamland. These are somewhat extensive, but a brief survey of some of the most important ones will suffice to indicate their general significance.

Firstly, to dream of white flowers has been supposed to prognosticate death; with which may be compared the popular belief that "if a white rosebush puts forth unexpectedly, it is a sign of death to the nearest house;" dream-omens in many cases reflecting the superstitions of daily life. In Scotch ballads the birch is associated with the dead, an illustration of which we find in the subjoined lines:--

*"I dreamed a dreary dream last nicht;
God keep us a' frae sorrow!
I dreamed I pu'd the birk sae green,
Wi' my true love on Yarrow.*

*I'll redde your dream, my sister dear,
I'll tell you a' your sorrow;
You pu'd the birk wi' your true love;
He's killed,--he's killed on Yarrow."*

Of the many plants which have been considered of good omen when seen in dreams, may be mentioned the palm-tree, olive, jasmine, lily, laurel, thistle, thorn, wormwood, currant, pear, &c.; whereas the greatest luck attaches to the rose. On the other hand, equally numerous are the plants which denote misfortune. Among these may be included the plum, cherry, withered roses, walnut, hemp, cypress, dandelion, &c. Beans are still said to produce bad dreams and to portend evil; and according to a Leicestershire saying, "If you wish for awful dreams or desire to go crazy, sleep in a bean-field all night." Some plants are said to foretell long life, such as the oak, apricot, apple, box, grape, and fig; and sickness is supposed to be presaged by such plants as the elder, onion, acorn, and plum.

Love and marriage are, as might be expected, well represented in the dream-flora; a circumstance, indeed, which has not failed to impress the young at all times. Thus, foremost amongst the flowers which indicate success in love is the rose, a fact which is not surprising when it is remembered how largely this favourite of our gardens enters into love-divinations. Then there is the clover, to dream of which foretells not only a happy marriage, but one productive of wealth and prosperity. In this case, too, it must be remembered the clover has long been reckoned as a mystic plant, having in most European countries been much employed for the purposes of divination. Of further plants credited as auguring well for love affairs are the raspberry, pomegranate, cucumber, currant, and box; but the walnut implies unfaithfulness, and the act of cutting parsley is an omen that the person so occupied will sooner or later be crossed in love. This ill-luck attached to parsley is in some measure explained from the fact that in many respects it is an unlucky plant. It is a belief, as we have noticed elsewhere, widely spread in Devonshire, that to transplant parsley is to commit a serious offence against the guardian genius who presides over parsley-beds, certain to be punished either on the offender himself or some member of his family within the course of the year. Once more "to dream of cutting cabbage," writes Mr. Folkard,[5] "Denotes jealousy on the part of wife, husband, or lover, as the case may be. To dream of any one else cutting them portends an attempt by some person to create jealousy in the loved one's mind. To dream of eating cabbages implies sickness to loved ones and loss of money." The bramble, an important plant in folk-lore, is partly unlucky, and, "To dream of passing through places covered with brambles

portends troubles; if they prick you, secret enemies will do you an injury with your friends; if they draw blood, expect heavy losses in trade." But to dream of passing through brambles unhurt denotes a triumph over enemies. To dream of being pricked with briars, says the "Royal Dream Book,"[6] "shows that the person dreaming has an ardent desire to something, and that young folks dreaming thus are in love, who prick themselves in striving to gather their rose."

Some plants are said to denote riches, such as the oak, marigold, pear and nut tree, while the gathering of nuts is said to presage the discovery of unexpected wealth. Again, to dream of fruit or flowers out of season is a bad omen, a notion, indeed, with which we find various proverbs current throughout the country. Thus, the Northamptonshire peasant considers the blooming of the apple-tree after the fruit is ripe as a certain omen of death--a belief embodied in the following proverb:

*"A bloom upon the apple-tree when the apples are ripe,
Is a sure termination to somebody's life."*

And once more, according to an old Sussex adage--

*"Fruit out of season
Sounds out of reason."*

On the other hand, to dream of fruit or any sort of crop during its proper season is still an indication of good luck.[7] Thus it is lucky to dream of daisies in spring-time or summer, but just the reverse in autumn or winter. Without enumerating further instances of this kind, we may quote the subjoined rhyme relating to the onion, as a specimen of many similar ones scattered here and there in various countries:[8]

*"To dream of eating onions means
Much strife in thy domestic scenes,
Secrets found out or else betrayed,
And many falsehoods made and said."*

Many plants in dream-lore have more than one meaning attached to them. Thus from the, "Royal Dream Book" we learn that yellow flowers "predict love mixed with jealousy, and that you will have more children to maintain than what justly belong to you." To dream of garlic indicates the discovery of hidden treasures, but the approach of some domestic quarrel.

Cherries, again, indicate inconstancy; but one would scarcely expect to find the thistle regarded as lucky; for, according to an old piece of

folk-lore, to dream of being surrounded by this plant is a propitious sign, foretelling that the person will before long have some pleasing intelligence. In the same way a similar meaning in dream-lore attaches to the thorn.

According to old dream-books, the dreaming of yew indicates the death of an aged person, who will leave considerable wealth behind him; while the violet is said to devote advancement in life. Similarly, too, the vine foretells prosperity, "for which," says a dream interpreter, "we have the example of Astyages, king of the Medes, who dreamed that his daughter brought forth a vine, which was a prognostic of the grandeur, riches, and felicity of the great Cyrus, who was born of her after this dream."

Plucking ears of corn signifies the existence of secret enemies, and Mr. Folkard quotes an old authority which tells us that the juniper is potent in dreams. Thus, "it is unlucky to dream of the tree itself, especially if the person be sick; but to dream of gathering the berries, if it be in winter, denotes prosperity. To dream of the actual berries signifies that the dreamer will shortly arrive at great honours and become an important person. To the married it foretells the birth of a male child."

Again, eating almonds signifies a journey, its success or otherwise being denoted by their tasting sweet or the contrary. Dreaming of grass is an auspicious omen, provided it be green and fresh; but if it be withered and decayed, it is a sign of the approach of misfortune and sickness, followed perhaps by death. Woe betide, too, the person who dreams that he is cutting grass.

Certain plants produce dreams on particular occasions. The mugwort and plantain have long been associated with Midsummer; and, according to Thomas Hill in his "Natural and Artificial Conclusions," a rare coal is to be found under these plants but one hour in the day, and one day in the year. When Aubrey happened to be walking behind Montague House at twelve o'clock on Midsummer day, he relates how he saw about twenty-two young women, most of them well dressed, and apparently all very busy weeding. On making inquiries, he was informed that they were looking for a coal under the root of a plantain, to put beneath their heads that night, when they would not fail to dream of their future husbands. But, unfortunately for this credulity, as an old author long ago pointed out, the coal is nothing but an old dead root, and that it may be found almost any day and hour when sought for. By lovers the holly has long been supposed to have mystic virtues as a dream-plant when used on the eve of any of the following festivals:

Christmas,
New Year's Day,
Midsummer, and
All Hallowe'en.

According to the mode of procedure practised in the northern counties, the anxious maiden, before retiring to rest, places three pails full of water in her bedroom, and then pins to her night-dress three leaves of green holly opposite to her heart, after which she goes to sleep. Believing in the efficacy of the charm, she persuades herself that she will be roused from her first slumber by three yells, as if from the throats of three bears, succeeded by as many hoarse laughs. When these have died away, the form of her future husband will appear, who will show his attachment to her by changing the position of the water-pails, whereas if he have no particular affection he will disappear without even touching them.

Then, of course, from time immemorial all kinds of charms have been observed on St. Valentine's Day to produce prophetic dreams. A popular charm consisted of placing two bay leaves, after sprinkling them with rose-water, across the pillow, repeating this formula:--

*"Good Valentine, be kind to me,
In dream let me my true love see."*

St. Luke's Day was in years gone by a season for love-divination, and among some of the many directions given we may quote the subjoined, which is somewhat elaborate:--

"Take marigold flowers, a sprig of
marjoram, thyme, and a little wormwood; dry them before a fire, rub
them
to powder, then sift it through a fine piece of lawn; simmer these with
a small quantity of virgin honey, in white vinegar, over a slow fire;
with this anoint your stomach, breasts, and lips, lying down, and repeat
these words thrice:--

*'St Luke, St. Luke, be kind to me,
In dream let me my true love see!'*

This said, hasten to sleep, and in the soft slumbers of night's repose, the very man whom you shall marry shall appear before you."

Lastly, certain plants have been largely used by gipsies and fortune-tellers for invoking dreams, and in many a country village these are plucked and given to the anxious inquirer with various formulas.

Footnotes:

1. "Primitive Culture," 1873, ii. 416, 417. 2. See Dorman's "Primitive Superstition," p. 68. 3. Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," 1851, ii. 108. 4. "Primitive Superstitions," p. 67. 5. "Plant-lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 265. 6. Quoted in Brand's "Popular Antiquities," 1849, iii. 135. 7. See Friend's "Flower-Lore," i. 207. 8. Folkard's "Plant-lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 477.

CHAPTER X.

PLANTS AND THE WEATHER.

The influence of the weather on plants is an agricultural belief which is firmly credited by the modern husbandman. In many instances his meteorological notions are the result of observation, although in some cases the reason assigned for certain pieces of weather-lore is far from obvious. Incidental allusion has already been made to the astrological doctrine of the influence of the moon's changes on plants--a belief which still retains its hold in most agricultural districts. It appears that in years gone by "neither sowing, planting, nor grafting was ever undertaken without a scrupulous attention to the increase or waning of the moon;"[1] and the advice given by Tusser in his "Five Hundred Points of Husbandry" is not forgotten even at the present day:--

*"Sow peas and beans in the wane of the moon,
Who soweth them sooner, he soweth too soon,
That they with the planet may rest and rise,
And flourish with bearing, most plentiful-wise."*

Many of the old gardening books give the same advice, although by some it has been severely ridiculed.

Scott, in his "Discoverie of Witchcraft," notes how, "the poor husbandman perceiveth that the increase of the moon maketh plants fruitful, so as in the full moone they are in best strength, decaying in the wane, and in the conjunction do entirely wither and fade." Similarly the growth of mushrooms is said to be affected by the weather, and in Devonshire apples "shrump up" if picked during a waning moon.[2]

One reason, perhaps, for the attention so universally paid to the moon's changes in agricultural pursuits is, writes Mr. Farrer, "that they are far more remarkable than any of the sun's, and more calculated to inspire dread by the nocturnal darkness they contend with, and hence are held in popular fancy nearly everywhere, to cause, portend, or accord with changes in the lot of mortals, and all things terrestrial." [3]

On this assumption may be explained the idea that the, "moon's wane makes things on earth to wane; when it is new or full it is everywhere the proper season for new crops to be sown." In the Hervey Islands cocoa-nuts are generally planted in the full of the moon, the size of the latter being regarded as symbolical of the ultimate fulness of the fruit.

In the same way the weather of certain seasons of the year is supposed to influence the vegetable world, and in Rutlandshire we are told that "a green Christmas brings a heavy harvest;" but a full moon about Christmas Day is unlucky, hence the adage:

*"Light Christmas, light wheatsheaf,
Dark Christmas, heavy wheatsheaf."*

If the weather be clear on Candlemas Day "corn and fruits will then be dear," and "whoever doth plant or sow on Shrove Tuesday, it will always remain green." According to a piece of weather-lore in Sweden, there is a saying that to strew ash branches in a field on Ash Wednesday is equivalent to three days' rain and three days' sun. Rain on Easter Day foretells a good harvest but poor hay crop, while thunder on All Fool's Day "brings good crops of corn and hay." According to the "Shepherd's Calendar," if, "Midsummer Day be never so little rainy the hazel and walnut will be scarce; corn smitten in many places; but apples, pears, and plums will not be hurt." And we are further reminded:--

*"Till St. James's Day be come and gone,
There may be hops or there may be none."*

Speaking of hops, it is said, "plenty of ladybirds, plenty of hops." It is also a popular notion among our peasantry that if a drop of rain hang on an oat at this season there will be a good crop. Another agricultural adage says:--

"No tempest, good July, lest corn come off bluely."

Then there is the old Michaelmas rhyme:--

*"At Michaelmas time, or a little before,
Half an apple goes to the core;
At Christmas time, or a little after,
A crab in the hedge, and thanks to the grafter."*

On the other hand, the blossoming of plants at certain times is said to be an indication of the coming weather, and so when the bramble blooms early in June an early harvest may be expected; and in the northern counties the peasant judges of the advance of the year by the appearance of the daisy, affirming that "spring has not arrived till you can set your foot on twelve daisies." We are also told that when many hawthorn blossoms are seen a severe winter will follow; and, according to Wilsford, "the broom having plenty of blossoms is a sign of a fruitful

year of corn." A Surrey proverb tells us that "It's always cold when the blackthorn comes into flower;" and there is the rhyme which reminds us that:--

*"If the oak is out before the ash,
'Twill be a summer of wet and splash;
But if the ash is before the oak,
'Twill be a summer of fire and smoke."*

There are several versions of this piece of weather-lore, an old Kentish one being "Oak, smoke; ash, quash;" and according to a version given in Notes and Queries (1st Series v. 71):--

*"If the oak's before the ash, then you'll only get a splash,
If the ash precedes the oak, then you may expect a soak."*

From the "Shepherd's Calendar" we learn that, "If in the fall of the leaf in October many leaves wither on the boughs and hang there, it betokens a frosty winter and much snow," with which may be compared a Devonshire saying:--

*"If good apples you would have
The leaves must go into the grave."*

Or, in other words, "you must plant your trees in the fall of the leaf." And again, "Apples, pears, hawthorn-quick, oak; set them at All-hallow-tide and command them to prosper; set them at Candlemas and entreat them to grow."

In Germany,[4] too, there is a rhyme which may be thus translated:--

*"When the hawthorn bloom too early shows,
We shall have still many snows."*

In the same way the fruit of trees and plants was regarded as a prognostication of the ensuing weather, and Wilsford tells us that "great store of walnuts and almonds presage a plentiful year of corn, especially filberts." The notion that an abundance of haws betokens a hard winter is still much credited, and has given rise to the familiar Scotch proverb:--

*"Many haws,
Many snaws."*

Another variation of the same adage in Kent is, "A plum year, a dumb year," and, "Many nits, many pits," implying that the abundance of nuts

in the autumn indicates the "pits" or graves of those who shall succumb to the hard and inclement weather of winter; but, on the other hand, "A cherry year, a merry year." A further piece of weather-lore tells us:--

*"Many rains, many rowans;
Many rowans, many yawns,"*

The meaning being that an abundance of rowans--the fruit of the mountain-ash--denote a deficient harvest.

Among further sayings of this kind may be noticed one relating to the onion, which is thus:--

*"Onion's skin very thin,
Mild-winter's coming in;
Onion's skin thick and tough,
Coming winter cold and rough."*

Again, many of our peasantry have long been accustomed to arrange their farming pursuits from the indications given them by sundry trees and plants. Thus it is said--

*"When the sloe tree is as white as a sheet,
Sow your barley whether it be dry or wet."*

With which may be compared another piece of weather-lore:--

*"When the oak puts on his gosling grey,
'Tis time to sow barley night or day."*

The leafing of the elm has from time immemorial been made to regulate agricultural operations, and hence the old rule:--

*"When the elmen leaf is as big as a mouse's ear,
Then to sow barley never fear.
When the elmen leaf is as big as an ox's eye,
Then say I, 'Hie, boys, hie!'"*

A Warwickshire variation is:--

*"When elm leaves are big as a shilling,
Plant kidney beans, if to plant 'em you're willing.
When elm leaves are as big as a penny,
You must plant kidney beans if you mean to have any."*

But if the grass grow in January, the husbandman is recommended to "lock his grain in the granary," while a further proverb informs us that:--

*"On Candlemas Day if the thorns hang a drop,
You are sure of a good pea crop."*

In bygone times the appearance of the berries of the elder was held to indicate the proper season for sowing wheat:--

*"With purple fruit when elder branches bend,
And their high hues the hips and cornels lend,
Ere yet chill hoar-frost comes, or sleety rain,
Sow with choice wheat the neatly furrowed plain."*

The elder is not without its teaching, and according to a popular old proverb:--

*"When the elder is white, brew and bake a peck,
When the elder is black, brew and bake a sack."*

According to an old proverb, "You must look for grass on the top of the oak tree," the meaning being, says Ray, that "the grass seldom springs well before the oak begins to put forth."

In the Western Counties it is asserted that frost ceases as soon as the mulberry tree bursts into leaf, with which may be compared the words of Autolycus in the "Winter's Tale" (iv. 3):--

*"When daffodils begin to peer,
With heigh! the doxy over the dale,
Why, then conies in the sweet o' the year."*

The dairyman is recommended in autumn to notice the appearance of the fern, because:--

*"When the fern is as high as a ladle,
You may sleep as long as you are able.
When the fern begins to look red,
Then milk is good with brown bread."*

Formerly certain agricultural operations were regulated by the seasons, and an old rule tells the farmer--

"Upon St. David's Day, put oats and barley in the clay."

Another version being:--

*"Sow peas and beans on David and Chad,
Be the weather good or bad."*

A Somersetshire piece of agricultural lore fixes an earlier date, and bids the farmer to "sow or set beans in Candlemas waddle." In connection with the inclement weather that often prevails throughout the spring months it is commonly said, "They that go to their corn in May may come weeping away," but "They that go in June may come back with a merry tune." Then there is the following familiar pretty couplet, of which there are several versions:--

*"The bee doth love the sweetest flower,
So doth the blossom the April shower."*

In connection with beans, there is a well-known adage which says:--

*"Be it weal or be it woe,
Beans should blow before May go."*

Of the numerous other items of plant weather-lore, it is said that "March wind wakes the ether (i. e., adder) and blooms the whin;" and many of our peasantry maintain that:--

*"A peck of March dust and a shower in May,
Makes the corn green and the fields gay."*

It should also be noted that many plants are considered good barometers. Chickweed, for instance, expands its leaves fully when fine weather is to follow; but "if it should shut up, then the traveller is to put on his greatcoat." [5] The same, too, is said to be the case with the pimpernel, convulvulus, and clover; while if the marigold does not open its petals by seven o'clock in the morning, either rain or thunder may be expected in the course of the day. According to Wilsford, "tezils, or fuller's thistle, being gathered and hanged up in the house, where the air may come freely to it, upon the alteration of cold and windy weather will grow smoother, and against rain will close up its prickles." Once more, according to the "Shepherd's Calendar," "Chaff, leaves, thistle-down, or such light things whisking about and turning round foreshows tempestuous winds;" And Coles, in his introduction to the "Knowledge of Plants," informs us that, "If the down flieth off colt's-foot, dandelion, and thistles when there is no wind, it is a sign of rain."

Some plants, again, have gained a notoriety from opening or shutting their flowers at the sun's bidding; in allusion to which Perdita remarks in the "Winter's Tale" (iv. 3):--

*"The marigold, that goes to bed with the sun, and with him
rises weeping."*

It was also erroneously said, like the sun-flower, to turn its blossoms to the sun, the latter being thus described by Thomson:--

*"The lofty follower of the sun,
Sad when he sets, shuts up her yellow leaves,
Drooping all night, and, when he warm returns,
Points her enamour'd bosom to his ray."*

Another plant of this kind is the endive, which is said to open its petals at eight o'clock in the morning, and to close them at four in the afternoon. Thus we are told how:--

*"On upland slopes the shepherds mark
The hour when, to the dial true,
Cichorium to the towering lark,
Lifts her soft eye, serenely blue."*

And as another floral index of the time of day may be noticed the goat's-beard, opening at sunrise and closing at noon--hence one of its popular names of "Go to bed at noon." This peculiarity is described by Bishop Mant:--

*"And goodly now the noon-tide hour,
When from his high meridian tower
The sun looks down in majesty,
What time about, the grassy lea.
The goat's-beard, prompt his rise to hail,
With broad expanded disk, in veil
Close mantling wraps its yellow head,
And goes, as peasants say, to bed."*

The dandelion has been nicknamed the peasant's clock, its flowers opening very early in the morning; while its feathery seed-tufts have long been in requisition as a barometer with children:--

*"Dandelion, with globe of down,
The schoolboy's clock in every town,
Which the truant puffs amain*

To conjure lost hours back again."

Among other flowers possessing a similar feature may be noticed the wild succory, creeping mallow, purple sandwort, small bindweed, common nipplewort, and smooth sow-thistle. Then of course there is the pimpernel, known as the shepherd's clock and poor man's weather-glass; while the small purslane and the common garden lettuce are also included in the flower-clock.[6]

Among further items of weather-lore associated with May, we are told how he that "sows oats in May gets little that way," and "He who mows in May will have neither fruit nor hay." Calm weather in June "sets corn in tune;" and a Suffolk adage says:--

*"Cut your thistles before St. John,
You will have two instead of one."*

But "Midsummer rain spoils hay and grain," whereas it is commonly said that,

*"A leafy May, and a warm June,
Bring on the harvest very soon."*

Again, boisterous wet weather during the month of July is to be deprecated, for, as the old adage runs:--

*"No tempest, good July,
Lest the corn look surly."*

Flowers of this kind are very numerous, and under a variety of forms prevail largely in our own and other countries, an interesting collection of which have been collected by Mr. Swainson in his interesting little volume on "Weather Folk-lore," in which he has given the parallels in foreign countries. It must be remembered, however, that a great number of these plant-sayings originated very many years ago--long before the alteration in the style of the calendar--which in numerous instances will account for their apparent contradictory character. In noticing, too, these proverbs, account must be taken of the variation of climate in different countries, for what applies to one locality does not to another. Thus, for instance, according to a Basque proverb, "A wet May, a fruitful year," whereas it is said in Corsica, "A rainy May brings little barley and no wheat." Instances of this kind are of frequent occurrence, and of course are in many cases explained by the difference of climate. But in comparing all branches of folk-lore, similar variations, as we have already observed, are noticeable, to account for which is often a task full of difficulty.

Of the numerous other instances of weather-lore associated with agricultural operations, it is said in relation to rain:--

"Sow beans in the mud, and they'll grow like wood."

And a saying in East Anglia is to this effect:--

"Sow in the slop (or sop), heavy at top."

A further admonition advises the farmer to

"Sow wheat in dirt, and rye in dust;"

While, according to a piece of folk-lore current in East Anglia, "Wheat well-sown is half-grown." The Scotch have a proverb warning the farmer against premature sowing:--

*"Nae hurry wi' your corns,
Nae hurry wi' your harrows;
Snaw lies ahint the dyke,
Mair may come and fill the furrows."*

And according to another old adage we are told how:--

*"When the aspen leaves are no bigger than your nail,
Is the time to look out for truff and peel." [7]*

In short, it will be found that most of our counties have their items of weather-lore; many of which, whilst varying in some respect, are evidently modifications of one and the same belief. In many cases, too, it must be admitted that this species of weather-wisdom is not based altogether on idle fancy, but in accordance with recognised habits of plants under certain conditions of weather. Indeed, it has been pointed out that so sensitive are various flowers to any change in the temperature or the amount of light, that it has been noticed that there is as much as one hour's difference between the time when the same flower opens at Paris and Upsala. It is, too, a familiar fact to students of vegetable physiology that the leaves of *Porleria hygrometrica* fold down or rise up in accordance with the state of the atmosphere. In short, it was pointed out in the *Standard*, in illustration of the extreme sensitiveness of certain plants to surrounding influences, how the *Haedysarums* have been well known ever since the days of Linnseus to suddenly begin to quiver without any apparent cause, and just as suddenly to stop. Force cannot initiate the movement, though cold will stop it, and heat will set in motion again the suspended animation of the leaves. If artificially kept

from moving they will, when released, instantly begin their task anew and with redoubled energy. Similarly the leaves of the *Colocasia esculenta*--the tara of the Sandwich Islands--will often shiver at irregular times of the day and night, and with such energy that little bells hung on the petals tinkle. And yet, curious to say, we are told that the keenest eye has not yet been able to detect any peculiarity in these plants to account for these strange motions. It has been suggested that they are due to changes in the weather of such a slight character that, "our nerves are incapable of appreciating them, or the mercury of recording their accompanying oscillations."

Footnotes:

1. Tylor's "Primitive Culture," 1873, i. 130. 2. See "English Folk-lore," pp. 42, 43. 3. "Primitive Manners and Customs," p. 74. 4. Dublin University Magazine, December 1873, p. 677. 5. See Swainson's "Weather-lore," p. 257. 6. See "Flower-lore," p. 226. 7. See Notes and Queries, 1st Ser. II. 511.

CHAPTER XI

PLANT PROVERBS.

A host of curious proverbs have, from the earliest period, clustered round the vegetable world, most of which--gathered from experience and observation--embody an immense amount of truth, besides in numerous instances conveying an application of a moral nature. These proverbs, too, have a very wide range, and on this account are all the more interesting from the very fact of their referring to so many conditions of life. Thus, the familiar adage which tells us that "nobody is fond of fading flowers," has a far deeper signification, reminding us that everything associated with change and decay must always be a matter of regret. To take another trite proverb of the same kind, we are told how "truths and roses have thorns about them," which is absolutely true; and there is the well-known expression "to pipe in an ivy leaf," which signifies "to go and engage in some futile or idle pursuit" which cannot be productive of any good. The common proverb, "He hath sown his wild oats," needs no comment; and the inclination of evil to override good is embodied in various adages, such, as, "The weeds o'ergrow the corn," while the tenacity with which evil holds its ground is further expressed in such sayings as this--"The frost hurts not weeds." The poisonous effects, again, of evil is exemplified thus--"One ill-bred mars a whole pot of pottage," and the rapidity with which it spreads has, amongst other proverbs, been thus described, "Evil weeds grow apace." Speaking of weeds in their metaphorical sense, we may quote one further adage respecting them:--

*"A weed that runs to seed
Is a seven years' weed."*

And the oft-quoted phrase, "It will be a nosegay to him as long as he lives," implies that disagreeable actions, instead of being lost sight of, only too frequently cling to a man in after years, or, as Ray says, "stink in his nostrils." The man who abandons some good enterprise for a worthless, or insignificant, undertaking is said to "cut down an oak and plant a thistle," of which there is a further version, "to cut down an oak and set up a strawberry." The truth of the next adage needs no comment--"Usurers live by the fall of heirs, as swine by the droppings of acorns."

Things that are slow but sure in their progress are the subject of a well-known Gloucestershire saying:--

"It is as long in coming as Cotswold barley."

"The corn in this cold country," writes Ray, "exposed to the winds, bleak and shelterless, is very backward at the first, but afterwards overtakes the forwardest in the country, if not in the barn, in the bushel, both for the quantity and goodness thereof." According to the Italians, "Every grain hath its bran," which corresponds with our saying, "Every bean hath its black," The meaning being that nothing is without certain imperfections. A person in extreme poverty is often described as being "as bare as the birch at Yule Even," and an ill-natured or evil-disposed person who tries to do harm, but cannot, is commonly said to:--

"Jump at it like a cock at a gooseberry."

Then the idea of durableness is thus expressed in a Wiltshire proverb:--

*"An eldern stake and a blackthorn ether [hedge],
Will make a hedge to last for ever"--*

an elder stake being commonly said to last in the ground longer than an iron bar of the same size.[1]

A person who is always on the alert to make use of opportunities, and never allows a good thing to escape his grasp, is said to "have a ready mouth for a ripe cherry." The rich beauty, too, of the cherry, which causes it to be gathered, has had this moral application attached to it:--

"A woman and a cherry are painted for their own harm."

Speaking of cherries, it may be mentioned that the awkwardness of eating them on account of their stones, has given rise to sundry proverbs, as the following:--

"Eat peas with the king, and cherries with the beggar,"

and:--

*"Those that eat cherries with great persons shall have their eyes
squirted out with the stones."*

A man who makes a great show without a corresponding practice is said to be like "fig-tree fuel, much smoke and little fire," and another adage says:--

"Peel a fig for your friend, and a peach for your enemy."

This proverb, however, is not quite clear when applied to this country. "To peel a fig, so far as we are concerned," writes Mr. Hazlitt[2], "can have no significance, except that we should not regard it as a friendly service; but, in fact, the proverb is merely a translation from the Spanish, and in that language and country the phrase carries a very full meaning, as no one would probably like to eat a fig without being sure that the fruit had not been tampered with. The whole saying is, however, rather unintelligible. 'Peeling a peach' would be treated anywhere as a dubious attention."

Of the many proverbs connected with thorns, there is the true one which tells us how,

"He that goes barefoot must not plant thorns,"

The meaning of which is self-evident, and the person who lives in a chronic state of uneasiness is said to, "sit on thorns." Then there is the oft-quoted adage:--

"While thy shoe is on thy foot, tread upon the thorns."

On the other hand, that no position in life is exempt from trouble of some kind is embodied in this proverb:--

"Wherever a man dwells he shall be sure to have a thorn bush near his door,"

which Ray also explains in its literal sense, remarking that there "are few places in England where a man can dwell, but he shall have one near him." Then, again, thorns are commonly said to "make the greatest crackling," and "the thorn comes forth with its point forward."

Many a great man has wished himself poor and obscure in his hours of adversity, a sentiment contained in the following proverb:--

"The pine wishes herself a shrub when the axe is at her root."

A quaint phrase applied to those who expect events to take an unnatural turn is:--

"Would you have potatoes grow by the pot-side?"

Amongst some of the other numerous proverbs may be mentioned a few relating to the apple; one of these reminding us that,

*"An apple, an egg, and a nut,
You may eat after a slut."*

Selfishness in giving is thus expressed:--

"To give an apple where there is an orchard."

And the idea of worthlessness is often referred to as when it is said that "There is small choice in rotten apples," with which may be compared another which warns us of the contagious effects of bad influence:--

"The rotten apple injures its neighbour."

The utter dissimilarity which often exists between two persons, or things, is jocularly enjoined in the familiar adage:--

"As like as an apple is to a lobster,"

And the folly of taking what one knows is paltry or bad has given rise to an instructive proverb:--

"Better give an apple than eat it."

The folly of expecting good results from the most unreasonable causes is the subject of the following old adage:--

"Plant the crab where you will, it will never bear pippins."

The crab tree has also been made the subject of several amusing rhymes, one of which is as follows:--

*"The crab of the wood is sauce very good for the crab of the sea,
But the wood of the crab is sauce for a drab that will not her husband obey."*

The coolness of the cucumber has long ago become proverbial for a person of a cold collected nature, "As cool as a cucumber," and the man who not only makes unreasonable requests, but equally expects them to be gratified, is said to "ask an elm-tree for pears." Then, again, foolish persons who have no power of observation, are likened to "a blind goose that knows not a fox from a fern bush."

The willow has long been a proverbial symbol of sadness, and on this account it was customary for those who were forsaken in love to wear a

garland made of willow. Thus in "Othello," Desdemona (Act iv. sc. 3) anticipating her death, says:--

*"My mother had a maid called Barbara:
She was in love; and he she loved proved mad,
And did forsake her: she had a song of willow;
An old thing 'twas, but it expressed her fortune,
And she died singing it: that song to-night
Will not go from my mind."*

According to another adage:--

"Willows are weak, yet they bind other wood,"

The significance of which is clear. Then, again, there is the not very complimentary proverbial saying, of which there are several versions:--

*"A spaniel, a woman, and a walnut-tree,
The more they're beaten, the better they be."*

Another variation, given by Moor in his "Suffolk Words" (p. 465), is this:--

*"Three things by beating better prove:
A nut, an ass, a woman;
The cudgel from their back remove,
And they'll be good for no man."*

A curious phrase current in Devonshire for a young lady who jilts a man is, "She has given him turnips;" and an expressive one for those persons who in spite of every kindness are the very reverse themselves is this:--

*"Though you stroke the nettle
ever so kindly, yet it will sting you;"*

With which may be compared a similar proverb equally suggestive:--

"He that handles a nettle tenderly is soonest stung."

The ultimate effects of perseverance, coupled with time, is thus shown:--

"With time and patience the leaf of the mulberry tree becomes satin."

A phrase current, according to Ray, in Gloucestershire for those "who always have a sad, severe, and terrific countenance," is, "He looks as if he lived on Tewkesbury mustard"--this town having been long noted for its "mustard-balls made there, and sent to other parts." It may be remembered that in "2 Henry IV." (Act ii. sc. 4) Falstaff speaks of "wit as thick as Tewkesbury mustard." Then there is the familiar adage applied to the man who lacks steady application, "A rolling stone gathers no moss," with which may be compared another, "Seldom mosseth the marble-stone that men [tread] oft upon."

Among the good old proverbs associated with flax may be mentioned the following, which enjoins the necessity of faith in our actions:--

"Get thy spindle and thy distaff ready, and God will send the flax."

A popular phrase speaks of "An owl in an ivy-bush," which perhaps was originally meant to denote the union of wisdom with conviviality, equivalent to "Be merry and wise." Formerly an ivy-bush was a common tavern sign, and gave rise to the familiar proverb, "Good wine needs no bush," this plant having been selected probably from having been sacred to Bacchus.

According to an old proverb respecting the camomile, we are told that "the more it is trodden the more it will spread," an allusion to which is made by Falstaff in "I Henry IV." (Act ii. sc. 4):--

*"For though the camomile, the more it is trodden on, the faster it grows;
yet youth, the more it is wasted, the sooner it wears."*

There are many proverbs associated with the oak. Referring to its growth, we are told that "The willow will buy a horse before the oak will pay for a saddle," the allusion being, of course, to the different rates at which trees grow. That occasionally some trifling event may have the most momentous issues is thus exemplified:--

"The smallest axe may fell the largest oak;"

Although, on the other hand, it is said that:--

"An oak is not felled at one chop."

A further variation of the same idea tells us how:--

"Little strokes fell great oaks,"

In connection with which may be quoted the words of Ovid to the same effect:--

*"Quid magis est durum saxo? Quid mollius unda?
Dura taneu molli saxa cavantur aqua?"*

Then, again, it is commonly said that:--

"Oaks may fall when seeds brave the storm."

And to give one more illustration:--

"The greatest oaks have been little acorns."

Similarly, with trees in general, we find a good number of proverbs. Thus one informs us that "Wise men in the world are like timber trees in a hedge, here and there one." That there is some good in every one is illustrated by this saying--"There's no tree but bears some fruit." The familiar proverb, that "The tree is no sooner down but every one runs for his hatchet," explains itself, whereas "The highest tree hath the greater fall," which, in its moral application, is equally true. Again, an agricultural precept enjoins the farmer to "Set trees poor and they will grow rich; set them rich and they will grow poor," that is, remove them out of a more barren into a fatter soil. That success can only be gained by toil is illustrated in this proverb--"He that would have the fruit must climb the tree," and once more it is said that "He who plants trees loves others beside himself."

In the Midland counties there is a proverbial saying that "if there are no kegs or seeds in the ash trees, there will be no king within the twelvemonth," the ash never being wholly destitute of kegs. Another proverb refers to the use of ash-wood for burning:--

*"Burn ash-wood green,
'Tis a fire for a queen,
Burn ash-wood dear,
'Twill make a man swear;"*

The meaning being that the ash when green burns well, but when dry or withered just the reverse.

A form of well-wishing formerly current in Yorkshire was thus:--

"May your footfall be by the root of an ash,"

In allusion, it has been suggested, to the fact that the ash is a capital tree for draining the soil in its vicinity.

But leaving trees, an immense number of proverbs are associated with corn, many of which are very varied. Thus, of those who contrive to get a good return for their meagre work or money, it is said:--

"You have made a long harvest for a little corn,"

With which may be compared the phrase:--

"You give me coloquintida (colocynth) for Herb-John."

Those who reap advantage from another man's labour are said to "put their sickle into another man's corn," and the various surroundings of royalty, however insignificant they may be, are generally better, says the proverb, than the best thing of the subjects:--

"The king's chaff is better than other people's corn."

Among the proverbs relating to grass may be mentioned the popular one, "He does not let the grass grow under his feet;" another old version of which is, "No grass grows on his heel." Another well-known adage reminds us that:--

"The higher the hill the lower the grass."

And equally familiar is the following:--

"While the grass groweth the seely horse starveth."

In connection with hops, the proverb runs that "hops make or break;" and no hop-grower, writes, Mr. Hazlitt,[3] "will have much difficulty in appreciating this proverbial dictum. An estate has been lost or won in the course of a single season; but the hop is an expensive plant to rear, and a bad year may spoil the entire crop."

Actions which produce different results to what are expected are thus spoken of:--

"You set saffron and there came up wolfsbane."

In Devonshire it may be noted that this plant is used to denote anything of value; and it is related of a farmer near Exeter who, when praising a certain farm, remarked, "'Tis a very pretty little place; he'd let so dear as saffron."

Many, again, are the proverbial sayings associated with roses--most of these being employed to indicate what is not only sweet and lovely, but bright and joyous. Thus, there are the well-known phrases, "A bed of roses," and "As sweet as a rose," and the oft-quoted popular adage:--

"The rose, called by any other name, would smell as sweet,"

Which, as Mr. Hazlitt remarks, "although not originally proverbial, or in its nature, or even in the poet's intention so, has acquired that character by long custom."

An old adage, which is still credited by certain of our country folk, reminds us that:--

"A parsley field will bring a man to his saddle and a woman to her grave,"

A warning which is not unlike one current in Surrey and other southern counties:--

"Where parsley's grown in the garden, there'll be a death before the year's out."

In Devonshire it has long been held unlucky to transplant parsley, and a poor woman in the neighbourhood of Morwenstow attributed a certain stroke with which one of her children had been afflicted after whooping-cough to the unfortunate undoing of the parsley bed. In the "Folk-lore Record," too, an amusing instance is related of a gardener at Southampton, who, for the same reason, refused to sow some parsley seed. It may be noted that from a very early period the same antipathy has existed in regard to this plant, and it is recorded how a few mules laden with parsley threw into a complete panic a Greek force on its march against the enemy. But the plant no doubt acquired its ominous significance from its having been largely used to bestrew the tombs of the dead; the Greek term "dehithai selinou"--to be in need of parsley--was a common phrase employed to denote those on the point of death. There are various other superstitions attached to this plant, as in Hampshire, where the peasants dislike giving any away for fear of some ill-luck befalling them. Similarly, according to another proverb:--

"Sowing fennel is sowing sorrow."

But why this should be so it is difficult to explain, considering that by the ancients fennel was used for the victor's wreath, and, as one of the plants dedicated to St. John, it has long been placed over doors on his

vigil. On the other hand, there is a common saying with respect to rosemary, which was once much cultivated in kitchen gardens:--

"Where rosemary flourishes the lady rules."

Vetches, from being reputed a most hardy grain, have been embodied in the following adage:--

*"A thetch will go through
The bottom of an old shoe,"*

Which reminds us of the proverbial saying:--

*"Like a camomile bed,
The more it is trodden
The more it will spread."*

The common expression:--

"Worth a plum,"

Is generally said of a man who is accredited with large means, and another adage tells us that,

"The higher the plum-tree, the riper the plum."

To live in luxury and affluence is expressed by the proverbial phrase "To live in clover," with which may be compared the saying "Do it up in lavender," applied to anything which is valuable and precious. A further similar phrase is "Laid up in lavender," in allusion to the old-fashioned custom of scenting newly-washed linen with this fragrant plant. Thus Shenstone says:--

*"Lavender, whose spikes of azure bloom
Shall be, erewhile, in arid bundles bound,*

*To lurk amidst the labours of her loom,
And crown her kerchiefs clean with mickle rare perfume."*

According to Gerarde, the Spartans were in the habit of eating cress with their bread, from a popular notion very generally held among the ancients, that those who ate it became noted for their wit and decision of character. Hence the old proverb:--

"Eat cress to learn more wit."

Of fruit proverbs we are told that,

"If you would enjoy the fruit, pluck not the flower."

And again:--

"When all fruit fails, welcome haws."

And "If you would have fruit, you must carry the leaf to the grave;" which Ray explains, "You must transplant your trees just about the fall of the leaf," and then there is the much-quoted rhyme:--

*"Fruit out of season,
Sorrow out of reason."*

Respecting the vine, it is said:--

"Make the vine poor, and it will make you rich,"

That is, prune off its branches; and another adage is to this effect: "Short boughs, long vintage." The constant blooming of the gorse has given rise to a popular Northamptonshire proverb:--

"When gorse is out of bloom, kissing is out of season."

The health-giving properties of various plants have long been in the highest repute, and have given rise to numerous well-known proverbs, which are still heard in many a home. Thus old Gerarde, describing the virtues of the mallow, tells us:--

*"If that of health you have any special care,
Use French mallows, that to the body wholesome are."*

Then there is the time-honoured adage which says that:--

*"He that would live for aye
Must eat sage in May."*

And Aubrey has bequeathed us the following piece of advice:--

*"Eat leeks in Lide, and ramsines in May,
And all the year after physicians may play."*

There are many sayings of this kind still current among our country-folk, some of which no doubt contain good advice; and of the plantain, which from time immemorial has been used as a vulnerary, it is said:--

"Plantain ribbed, that heals the reaper's wounds."

In Herefordshire there is a popular rhyme associated with the aul (*Alnus glutinosus*):--

*"When the bud of the aul is as big as the trout's eye,
Then that fish is in season in the river Wye."*

A Yorkshire name for the quaking grass (*Briza media*) is "trembling jockies," and according to a local proverb:--

*"A trimmling jock i' t' house,
An' you weean't hev a mouse,"*

This plant being, it is said, obnoxious to mice. According to a Warwickshire proverb:--

*"Plant your sage and rue together,
The sage will grow in any weather."*

This list of plant proverbs might easily be extended, but the illustrations quoted in the preceding pages are a fair sample of this portion of our subject. Whereas many are based on truth, others are more or less meaningless. At any rate, they still thrive to a large extent among our rural community, by whom they are regarded as so many household sayings.

Footnotes:

1. See Akerman's "Wiltshire Glossary," p. 18.
2. "English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases," pp. 327-8.
3. "Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases," p. 207.

CHAPTER XII.

PLANTS AND THEIR CEREMONIAL USE.

In the earliest period of primitive society flowers seem to have been largely used for ceremonial purposes. Tracing their history downwards up to the present day, we find how extensively, throughout the world, they have entered into sacred and other rites. This is not surprising when we remember how universal have been the love and admiration for these choice and lovely productions of nature's handiwork. From being used as offerings in the old heathen worship they acquired an additional veneration, and became associated with customs which had important significance. Hence the great quantity of flowers required, for ceremonial purposes of various kinds, no doubt promoted and encouraged a taste for horticulture even among uncultured tribes. Thus the Mexicans had their famous floating gardens, and in the numerous records handed down of social life, as it existed in different countries, there is no lack of references to the habits and peculiarities of the vegetable world.

Again, from all parts of the world, the histories of bygone centuries have contributed their accounts of the rich assortment of flowers in demand for the worship of the gods, which are valuable as indicating how elaborate and extensive was the knowledge of plants in primitive periods, and how magnificent must have been the display of these beautiful and brilliant offerings. Amongst some tribes, too, so sacred were the flowers used in religious rites held, that it was forbidden so much as to smell them, much less to handle them, except by those whose privileged duty it was to arrange them for the altar. Coming down to the historic days of Greece and Rome, we have abundant details of the skill and care that were displayed in procuring for religious purposes the finest and choicest varieties of flowers; abundant allusions to which are found in the old classic writings.

The profuseness with which flowers were used in Rome during triumphal processions has long ago become proverbial, in allusion to which Macaulay says:--

*"On they ride to the Forum,
While laurel boughs, and flowers,
From house-tops and from windows,
Fell on their crests in showers."*

Flowers, in fact, were in demand on every conceivable occasion, a custom which was frequently productive of costly extravagance. Then

there was their festival of the Floralia, in honour of the reappearance of spring-time, with its hosts of bright blossoms, a survival of which has long been kept up in this country on May Day, when garlands and carols form the chief feature of the rustic merry-making. Another grand ceremonial occasion, when flowers were specially in request, was the Fontinalia, an important day in Rome, for the wells and fountains were crowned with flowers:--

*"Fontinalia festus erat dies Romae, quo in fontes
coronas projiciebant, puteosque coronabant, ut a quibus pellucidos
liquores at restinguendam sitim acciperent, iisdem gratiam referre hoc
situ viderentur."*

A pretty survival of this festival has long been observed in the well-dressing of Tissington on Ascension Day, when the wells are most beautifully decorated with leaves and flowers, arranged in fanciful devices, interwoven into certain symbols and texts. This floral rite is thus described in "The Fleece":--

*"With light fantastic toe, the nymphs
Thither assembled, thither every swain;
And o'er the dimpled stream a thousand flowers,
Pale lilies, roses, violets and pinks,
Mix'd with the greens of bouret, mint, and thyme,
And trefoil, sprinkled with their sportive arms,
Such custom holds along th' irriguous vales,
From Wreken's brow to rocky Dolvoryn,
Sabrina's early haunt."*

With this usage may be compared one performed by the fishermen of Weymouth, who on the first of May put out to sea for the purpose of scattering garlands of flowers on the waves, as a propitiatory offering to obtain food for the hungry. "This link," according to Miss Lambert, "is but another link in the chain that connects us with the yet more primitive practice of the Red Indian, who secures passage across the Lake Superior, or down the Mississippi, by gifts of precious tobacco, which he wafts to the great spirit of the Flood on the bosom of its waters."

By the Romans a peculiar reverence seems to have attached to their festive garlands, which were considered unsuitable for wearing in public. Hence, any person appearing in one was liable to punishment, a law which was carried out with much rigour. On one occasion, Lucius Fulvius, a banker, having been convicted at the time of the second Punic war, of looking down from the balcony of a house with a chaplet of roses on his head, was thrown into prison by order of the Senate, and here

kept for sixteen years, until the close of the war. A further case of extreme severity was that of P. Munatius, who was condemned by the Triumviri to be put in chains for having crowned himself with flowers from the statue of Marsyas.

Allusions to such estimation of garlands in olden times are numerous in the literature of the past, and it may be remembered how Montesquieu remarked that it was with two or three hundred crowns of oak that Rome conquered the world.

Guests at feasts wore garlands of flowers tied with the bark of the linden tree, to prevent intoxication; the wreath having been framed in accordance with the position of the wearer. A poet, in his paraphrase on Horace, thus illustrates this custom:--

*"Nay, nay, my boy, 'tis not for me
This studious pomp of Eastern luxury;
Give me no various garlands fine
With linden twine;
Nor seek where latest lingering blows
The solitary rose."*

Not only were the guests adorned with flowers, but the waiters, drinking-cups, and room, were all profusely decorated.[1] "In short," as the author of "Flower-lore" remarks, "it would be difficult to name the occasions on which flowers were not employed; and, as almost all plants employed in making garlands had a symbolical meaning, the garland was composed in accordance with that meaning." Garlands, too, were thrown to actors on the stage, a custom which has come down to the present day in an exaggerated form.

Indeed, many of the flowers in request nowadays for ceremonial uses in our own and other countries may be traced back to this period; the symbolical meaning attached to certain plants having survived after the lapse of many centuries. For a careful description of the flowers thus employed, we would refer the reader to two interesting papers contributed by Miss Lambert to the Nineteenth Century,[2] in which she has collected together in a concise form all the principal items of information on the subject in past years. A casual perusal of these papers will suffice to show what a wonderful knowledge of botany the ancients must have possessed; and it may be doubted whether the most costly array of plants witnessed at any church festival supersedes a similar display witnessed by worshippers in the early heathen temples. In the same way, we gain an insight into the profusion of flowers employed by heathen communities in later centuries, showing how intimately associated these have been with their various forms of worship. Thus, the Singhalese seem to have used flowers to an almost incredible extent,

and one of their old chronicles tells us how the Ruanwellé dagoba--270 feet high--was festooned with garlands from pedestal to pinnacle, till it had the appearance of one uniform bouquet. We are further told that in the fifteenth century a certain king offered no less than 6,480,320 sweet-smelling flowers at the shrine of the tooth; and, among the regulations of the temple at Dambedenia in the thirteenth century, one prescribes that "every day an offering of 100,000 blossoms, and each day a different kind of flower," should be presented. This is a striking instance, but only one of many.

"With regard to Greece, there are few of our trees and flowers," writes Mr. Moncure Conway,[3] "which were not cultivated in the gorgeous gardens of Epicurus, Pericles, and Pisistratus." Among the flowers chiefly used for garlands and chaplets in ceremonial rites we find the rose, violet, anemone, thyme, melilot, hyacinth, crocus, yellow lily, and yellow flowers generally. Thucydides relates how, in the ninth year of the Peloponnesian War, the temple of Juno at Argos was burnt down owing to the priestess Chrysis having set a lighted torch too near the garlands and then fallen asleep. The garlands caught fire, and the damage was irremediable before she was conscious of the mischief. The gigantic scale on which these floral ceremonies were conducted may be gathered from the fact that in the procession of Europa at Corinth a huge crown of myrtle, thirty feet in circumference, was borne. At Athens the myrtle was regarded as the symbol of authority, a wreath of its leaves having been worn by magistrates. On certain occasions the mitre of the Jewish high priest was adorned with a chaplet of the blossoms of the henbane. Of the further use of garlands, we are told that the Japanese employ them very freely;[4] both men and women wearing chaplets of fragrant blossoms. A wreath of a fragrant kind of olive is the reward of literary merit in China. In Northern India the African marigold is held as a sacred flower; they adorn the trident emblem of Mahádivá with garlands of it, and both men and women wear chaplets made of its flowers on his festivals. Throughout Polynesia garlands have been habitually worn on seasons of "religious solemnity or social rejoicing," and in Tonga they were employed as a token of respect. In short, wreaths seem to have been from a primitive period adopted almost universally in ceremonial rites, having found equal favour both with civilised as well as uncivilised communities. It will probably, too, always be so.

Flowers have always held a prominent place in wedding ceremonies, and at the present day are everywhere extensively used. Indeed, it would be no easy task to exhaust the list of flowers which have entered into the marriage customs of different countries, not to mention the many bridal emblems of which they have been made symbolical. As far back as the time of Juno, we read, according to Homer's graphic account, how:--

*"Glad earth perceives, and from her bosom pours
Unbidden herbs and voluntary flowers:
Thick, new-born violets a soft carpet spread,
And clust'ring lotos swelled the rising bed;
And sudden hyacinths the earth bestrow,
And flamy crocus made the mountain glow."*

According to a very early custom the Grecian bride was required to eat a quince, and the hawthorn was the flower which formed her wreath, which at the present day is still worn at Greek nuptials, the altar being decked with its blossoms. Among the Romans the hazel held a significant position, torches having been burnt on the wedding evening to insure prosperity to the newly-married couple, and both in Greece and Rome young married couples were crowned with marjoram. At Roman weddings, too, oaken boughs were carried during the ceremony as symbols of fecundity; and the bridal wreath was of verbena, plucked by the bride herself. Holly wreaths were sent as tokens of congratulation, and wreaths of parsley and rue were given under a belief that they were effectual preservatives against evil spirits. In Germany, nowadays, a wreath of vervain is presented to the newly-married bride; a plant which, on account of its mystic virtues, was formerly much used for love-philtres and charms. The bride herself wears a myrtle wreath, as also does the Jewish maiden, but this wreath was never given either to a widow or a divorced woman. Occasionally, too, it is customary in Germany to present the bride and bridegroom with an almond at the wedding banquet, and in the nuptial ceremonies of the Czechs this plant is distributed among the guests. In Switzerland so much importance was in years past attached to flowers and their symbolical significance that, "a very strict law was in force prohibiting brides from wearing chaplets or garlands in the church, or at any time during the wedding feast, if they had previously in any way forfeited their rights to the privileges of maidenhood." [5] With the Swiss maiden the edelweiss is almost a sacred flower, being regarded as a proof of the devotion of her lover, by whom it is often gathered with much risk from growing in inaccessible spots. In Italy, as in days of old, nuts are scattered at the marriage festival, and corn is in many cases thrown over the bridal couple, a survival of the old Roman custom of making offerings of corn to the bride. A similar usage prevails at an Indian wedding, where, "after the first night, the mother of the husband, with all the female relatives, comes to the young bride and places on her head a measure of corn--emblem of fertility. The husband then comes forward and takes from his bride's head some handfuls of the grain, which he scatters over himself." As a further illustration we may quote the old Polish custom, which consisted of visitors throwing wheat, rye, oats, barley, rice, and beans at the door of the bride's house,

as a symbol that she never would want any of these grains so long as she did her duty. In the Tyrol is a fine grove of pine-trees--the result of a long-established custom for every newly united couple to plant a marriage tree, which is generally of the pine kind. Garlands of wild asparagus are used by the Boeotians, while with the Chinese the peach-blossom is the popular emblem of a bride.

In England, flowers have always been largely employed in the wedding ceremony, although they have varied at different periods, influenced by the caprice of fashion. Thus, it appears that flowers were once worn by the betrothed as tokens of their engagement, and Quarles in his "Sheapheard's Oracles," 1646, tells us how,

"Love-sick swains

*Compose rush-rings and myrtle-berry chains,
And stuck with glorious kingcups, and their bonnets
Adorn'd with laurell slips, chaunt their love sonnets."*

Spenser, too, in his "Shepherd's Calendar" for April, speaks of "Coronations and sops in wine worn of paramours"--sops in wine having been a nickname for pinks (*Dianthus plumarius*), although Dr. Prior assigns the name to *Dianthus caryophyllus*. Similarly willow was worn by a discarded lover. In the bridal crown, the rosemary often had a distinguished place, besides figuring at the ceremony itself, when it was, it would seem, dipped in scented water, an allusion to which we find in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Scornful Lady," where it is asked, "Were the rosemary branches dipped?" Another flower which was entwined in the bridal garland was the lily, to which Ben Jonson refers in speaking of the marriage of his friend Mr. Weston with the Lady Frances Stuart:--

*"See how with roses and with lilies shine,
Lilies and roses (flowers of either sex),
The bright bride's paths."*

It was also customary to plant a rose-bush at the head of the grave of a deceased lover, should either of them die before the wedding. Sprigs of bay were also introduced into the bridal wreath, besides ears of corn, emblematical of the plenty which might always crown the bridal couple. Nowadays the bridal wreath is almost entirely composed of orange-blossom, on a background of maiden-hair fern, with a sprig of *stephanotis* interspersed here and there. Much uncertainty exists as to why this plant was selected, the popular reason being that it was adopted as an emblem of fruitfulness. According to a correspondent of Notes and Queries, the practice may be traced to the Saracens, by whom the orange-blossom was regarded as a symbol of a prosperous

marriage—a circumstance which is partly to be accounted for by the fact that in the East the orange-tree bears ripe fruit and blossom at the same time.

Then there is the bridal bouquet, which is a very different thing from what it was in years gone by. Instead of being composed of the scarcest and most costly flowers arranged in the most elaborate manner, it was a homely nosegay of mere country flowers--some of the favourite ones, says Herrick, being pansy, rose, lady-smock, prick-madam, gentle-heart, and maiden-blush. A spray of gorse was generally inserted, in allusion, no doubt, to the time-honoured proverb, "When the furze is out of bloom, kissing is out of fashion." In spring-time again, violets and primroses were much in demand, probably from being in abundance at the season; although they have generally been associated with early death.

Among the many floral customs associated with the wedding ceremony may be mentioned the bridal-strewings, which were very prevalent in past years, a survival of which is still kept up at Knutsford, in Cheshire. On such an occasion, the flowers used were emblematical, and if the bride happened to be unpopular, she often encountered on her way to the church flowers of a not very complimentary meaning. The practice was not confined to this country, and we are told how in Holland the threshold of the newly-married couple was strewn with flowers, the laurel being as a rule most conspicuous among the festoons. Lastly, the use of flowers in paying honours to the dead has been from time immemorial most widespread. Instances are so numerous that it is impossible to do more than quote some of the most important, as recorded in our own and other countries. For detailed accounts of these funereal floral rites it would be necessary to consult the literature of the past from a very early period, and the result of such inquiries would form material enough for a goodly-sized volume. The respect for the dead among the early Greeks was very great, and Miss Lambert[6] quotes the complaint of Petala to Simmalion, in the Epistles of Alciphron, to show how special was the dedication of flowers to the dead:--"I have a lover who is a mourner, not a lover; he sends me garlands and roses as if to deck a premature grave, and he says he weeps through the live-long night."

The chief flowers used by them for strewing over graves were the polyanthus, myrtle, and amaranth; the rose, it would appear from Anacreon, having been thought to possess a special virtue for the dead:--

*"When pain afflicts and sickness grieves,
Its juice the drooping heart relieves;
And after death its odours shed
A pleasing fragrance o'er the dead."*

And Electra is represented as complaining that the tomb of her father, Agamemnon, had not been duly adorned with myrtle--

*"With no libations, nor with myrtle boughs,
Were my dear father's manes gratified."*

The Greeks also planted asphodel and mallow round their graves, as the seeds of these plants were supposed to nourish the dead. Mourners, too, wore flowers at the funeral rites, and Homer relates how the Thessalians used crowns of amaranth at the burial of Achilles. The Romans were equally observant, and Ovid, when writing from the land of exile, prayed his wife--"But do you perform the funeral rites for me when dead, and offer chaplets wet with your tears. Although the fire shall have changed my body into ashes, yet the sad dust will be sensible of your pious affection." Like the Greeks, the Romans set a special value on the rose as a funeral flower, and actually left directions that their graves should be planted with this favourite flower, a custom said to have been introduced by them into this country. Both Camden and Aubrey allude to it, and at the present day in Wales white roses denote the graves of young unmarried girls.

Coming down to modern times, we find the periwinkle, nicknamed "death's flower," scattered over the graves of children in Italy—notably Tuscany--and in some parts of Germany the pink is in request for this purpose. In Persia we read of:--

*"The basil-tuft that waves
Its fragrant blossoms over graves,"*

And among the Chinese, roses, the anemone, and a species of lycoris are planted over graves. The Malays use a kind of basil, and in Tripoli tombs are adorned with such sweet and fragrant flowers as the orange, jessamine, myrtle, and rose. In Mexico the Indian carnation is popularly known as the "flower of the dead," and the people of Tahiti cover their dead with choice flowers. In America the Freemasons place twigs of acacia on the coffins of brethren. The Buddhists use flowers largely for funeral purposes, and an Indian name for the tamarisk is the "messenger of Yama," the Indian God of Death. The people of Madagascar have a species of mimosa, which is frequently found growing on the tombs, and in Norway the funeral plants are juniper and fir. In France the custom very largely nourishes, roses and orange-blossoms in the southern provinces being placed in the coffins of the young. Indeed, so general is the practice in France that, "sceptics and believers uphold it, and

statesmen, and soldiers, and princes, and scholars equally with children and maidens are the objects of it."

Again, in Oldenburg, it is said that cornstalks must be scattered about a house in which death has entered, as a charm against further misfortune, and in the Tyrol an elder bush is often planted on a newly-made grave.

In our own country the practice of crowning the dead and of strewing their graves with flowers has prevailed from a very early period, a custom which has been most pathetically and with much grace described by Shakespeare in "Cymbeline" (Act iv. sc. 2):--

*"With fairest flowers,
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose; nor
The azured harebell, like thy veins; no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath: the ruddock would,
With charitable bill, O bill, sore-shaming
Those rich-left heirs that let their fathers lie
Without a monument! bring thee all this;
Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none,
To winter-ground thy corse."*

Allusions to the custom are frequently to be met with in our old writers, many of which have been collected together by Brand.[7] In former years it was customary to carry sprigs of rosemary at a funeral, probably because this plant was considered emblematical of remembrance:--

*"To show their love, the neighbours far and near,
Follow'd with wistful look the damsel's bier;
Spring'd rosemary the lads and lasses bore,
While dismally the parson walked before."*

Gay speaks of the flowers scattered on graves as "rosemary, daisy, butter'd flower, and endive blue," and Pepys mentions a churchyard near Southampton where the graves were sown with sage. Another plant which has from a remote period been associated with death is the cypress, having been planted by the ancients round their graves. In our own country it was employed as a funeral flower, and Coles thus refers to it, together with the rosemary and bay:--

*"Cypresse garlands are of great account at funerals amongst the gentler sort,
but rosemary and bayes are used by the commons both at funerals and*

weddings. They are all plants which fade not a good while after they are gathered, and used (as I conceive) to intimate unto us that the remembrance of the present solemnity might not die presently (at once), but be kept in mind for many years."

The yew has from time immemorial been planted in churchyards besides being used at funerals. Paris, in "Romeo and Juliet", (Act v. sc. 3), says:--

*"Under yon yew trees lay thee all along,
Holding thine ear close to the hollow ground;
So shall no foot upon the churchyard tread,
Being loose, unfirm, with digging up of graves,
But thou shall hear it."*

Shakespeare also refers to the custom of sticking yew in the shroud in the following song in "Twelfth Night" (Act ii. sc. 4):--

*"My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
Oh, prepare it;
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it."*

Unhappy lovers had garlands of willow, yew, and rosemary laid on their biers, an allusion to which occurs in the "Maid's Tragedy":--

*"Lay a garland on my hearse
Of the dismal yew;
Maidens, willow branches bear--
Say I died true.
My love was false, but I was firm
From my hour of birth;
Upon my buried body lie
Lightly, gentle earth."*

Among further funeral customs may be mentioned that of carrying a garland of flowers and sweet herbs before a maiden's coffin, and afterwards suspending it in the church. Nichols, in his "History of Lancashire" (vol. ii. pt. i. 382), speaking of Waltham in Framland Hundred, says: "In this church under every arch a garland is suspended, one of which is customarily placed there whenever any young unmarried woman dies." It is to this custom Gay feelingly alludes:--

*"To her sweet mem'ry flowing garlands strung,
On her now empty seat aloft were hung."*

Indeed, in all the ceremonial observances of life, from the cradle to the grave, flowers have formed a prominent feature, the symbolical meaning long attached to them explaining their selection on different occasions.

Footnotes:

1. See "Flower-lore," p. 147. 2. "The Ceremonial Use of Flowers." 3. Fraser's Magazine, 1870, p. 711.
4. "Flower-lore," pp. 149-50. 5. Miss Lambert, Nineteenth Century, May 1880, p. 821. 6. Nineteenth Century, September 1878, p. 473. 7. "Popular Antiquities," 1870, ii. 24, &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

PLANT NAMES.

The origin and history of plant names is a subject of some magnitude, and is one that has long engaged the attention of philologists. Of the many works published on plant names, that of the "English Dialect Society"[1] is by far the most complete, and forms a valuable addition to this class of literature.

Some idea of the wide area covered by the nomenclature of plants, as seen in the gradual evolution and descent of vernacular names, may be gathered even from a cursory survey of those most widely known in our own and other countries. Apart, too, from their etymological associations, it is interesting to trace the variety of sources from whence plant names have sprung, a few illustrations of which are given in the present chapter.

At the outset, it is noteworthy that our English plant names can boast of a very extensive parentage, being, "derived from many languages--Latin, Greek, ancient British, Anglo-Saxon, Norman, Low German, Swedish, Danish, Arabic, Persian." [2] It is not surprising, therefore, that in many cases much confusion has arisen in unraveling their meaning, which in the course of years would naturally become more or less modified by a succession of influences such as the intercommunication and change of ideas between one country and another. On the other hand, numerous plant names clearly display their origin, the lapse of years having left these unaffected, a circumstance which is especially true in the case of Greek and Latin names. Names of French origin are frequently equally distinct, a familiar instance being dandelion, from the French *dent-de-lion*, "lion's tooth," although the reason for its being so called is by no means evident. At the same time, it is noticeable that in nearly every European language the plant bears a similar name; whereas Professor De Gubernatis connects the name with the sun (*Helios*), and adds that a lion was the animal symbol of the sun, and that all plants named after him are essentially plants of the sun. [3] One of the popular names of the St. John's wort is *tutsan*, a corruption of the French *toute saine*, so called from its healing properties, and the *mignonette* is another familiar instance. The *flower-de-luce*, one of the names probably of the iris, is derived from *fleur de Louis*, from its having been assumed as his device by Louis VII. of France. It has undergone various changes, having been in all probability contracted into *fleur-de-luce*, and finally into *fleur-de-lys* or *fleur-de-lis*. An immense deal of discussion has been devoted to the history of this name, and a great many curious theories

proposed in explanation of it, some being of opinion that the lily and not the iris is referred to. But the weight of evidence seem to favour the iris theory, this plant having been undoubtedly famous in French history. Once more, by some,[4] the name fleur-de-lys has been derived from Löys, in which manner the twelve first Louis signed their names, and which was easily contracted into Lys. Some consider it means the flower that grows on the banks of the river Lis, which separated France and Artois from Flanders. Turning to the literature of the past, Shakespeare has several allusions to the plant, as in "I Henry VI," where a messenger enters and exclaims:--

*"Awake, awake, English nobility!
Let not sloth dim your honours new begot;
Cropp'd are the flower-de-luces in your arms;
Of England's coat one half is cut away."*

Spenser mentions the plant, and distinguishes it from the lily:--

*"Show mee the grounde with daifadown-dillies,
And cowslips, and kingcups, and loved lillies;
The pretty pawnee,
And the cherisaunce,
Shall march with the fayre flowre delice."*

Another instance is the mignonette of our French neighbours, known also as the "love-flower." One of the names of the deadly nightshade is belladonna which reminds us of its Italian appellation, and "several of our commonest plant names are obtained from the Low German or Dutch, as, for instance, buckwheat (*Polygonum fagopyrum*), from the Dutch bockweit." The rowan-tree (*Pyrus aucuparia*) comes from the Danish röun, Swedish rünn, which, as Dr. Prior remarks, is traceable to the "old Norse runa, a charm, from its being supposed to have power to avert evil." Similarly, the adder's tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*) is said to be from the Dutch adder-stong, and the word hawthorn is found in the various German dialects.

As the authors of "English Plant Names" remark (Intr. xv.), many north-country names are derived from Swedish and Danish sources, an interesting example occurring in the word kemps, a name applied to the black heads of the ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). The origin of this name is to be found in the Danish kaempe, a warrior, and the reason for its being so called is to be found in the game which children in most parts of the kingdom play with the flower-stalks of the plantain, by endeavouring to knock off the heads of each other's mimic weapons. Again, as Mr. Friend points out, the birch would take us back to the

primeval forests of India, and among the multitudinous instances of names traceable to far-off countries may be mentioned the lilac and tulip from Persia, the latter being derived from *thoulyban*, the word used in Persia for a turban. Lilac is equivalent to *lilag*, a Persian word signifying flower, having been introduced into Europe from that country early in the sixteenth century by Busbeck, a German traveller. But illustrations of this land are sufficient to show from how many countries our plant names have been brought, and how by degrees they have become interwoven into our own language, their pronunciation being Anglicised by English speakers.

Many plants, again, have been called in memory of leading characters in days gone by, and after those who discovered their whereabouts and introduced them into European countries. Thus the fuchsia, a native of Chili, was named after Leonard Fuchs, a well-known German botanist, and the magnolia was so called in honour of Pierre Magnol, an eminent writer on botanical subjects. The stately dahlia after Andrew Dahl, the Swedish botanist. But, without enumerating further instances, for they are familiar to most readers, it may be noticed that plants which embody the names of animals are very numerous indeed. In many cases this has resulted from some fancied resemblance to some part of the animal named; thus from their long tongued-like leaves, the hart's-tongue, lamb's-tongue, and ox-tongue were so called, while some plants have derived their names from the snouts of certain animals, such as the swine's-snout (*Lentodon taraxacum*), and calf's-snout, or, as it is more commonly termed, snapdragon (*Antirrhinum majus*). The gaping corollas of various blossoms have suggested such names as dog's-mouth, rabbit's-mouth, and lion's-snap, and plants with peculiarly-shaped leaves have given rise to names like these--mouse-ear (*Stachys Zanaia*), cat's-ears, and bear's-ears. Numerous names have been suggested by their fancied resemblance to the feet, hoofs, and tails of animals and birds; as, for instance, colt's-foot, crow-foot, bird's-foot trefoil, horse-shoe vetch, bull-foot, and the vervain, nicknamed frog's-foot. Then there is the larkspur, also termed lark's-claw, and lark's-heel, the lamb's-toe being so called from its downy heads of flowers, and the horse-hoof from the shape of the leaf. Among various similar names may be noticed the crane's-bill and stork's-bill, from their long beak-like seed-vessels, and the valerian, popularly designated capon's-tail, from its spreading flowers.

Many plant names have animal prefixes, these indeed forming a very extensive list. But in some instances, "the name of an animal prefixed has a totally different signification, denoting size, coarseness, and frequently worthlessness or spuriousness." Thus the horse-parsley was so called from its coarseness as compared with smallage or celery, and the horse-mushroom from its size in distinction to a species more commonly eaten.

The particular uses to which certain plants have been applied have originated their names: the horse-bean, from being grown as a food for horses; and the horse-chestnut, because used in Turkey for horses that are broken or touched in the wind. Parkinson, too, adds how, "horse-chestnuts are given in the East, and so through all Turkey, unto horses to cure them of the cough, shortness of wind, and such other diseases." The germander is known as horse-chere, from its growing after horse-droppings; and the horse-bane, because supposed in Sweden to cause a kind of palsy in horses--an effect which has been ascribed by Linnaeus not so much to the noxious qualities of the plant itself, as to an insect (*Curculio paraplecticus*) that breeds in its stem.

The dog has suggested sundry plant names, this prefix frequently suggesting the idea of worthlessness, as in the case of the dog-violet, which lacks the sweet fragrance of the true violet, and the dog-parsley, which, whilst resembling the true plant of this name, is poisonous and worthless. In like manner there is the dog-elder, dog's-mercury, dog's-chamomile, and the dog-rose, each a spurious form of a plant quite distinct; while on the other hand we have the dog's-tooth grass, from the sharp-pointed shoots of its underground stem, and the dog-grass (*Triticum caninu*), because given to dogs as an aperient. The cat has come in for its due share of plant names, as for instance the sun-spurge, which has been nicknamed cat's-milk, from its milky juice oozing in drops, as milk from the small teats of a cat; and the blossoms of the talix, designated cats-and-kittens, or kittings, probably in allusion to their soft, fur-like appearance. Further names are, cat's-faces (*Viola tricolor*), cat's-eyes (*Veronica chamcaedrys*), cat's-tail, the catkin of the hazel or willow, and cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris maculata*).

The bear is another common prefix. Thus there is the bear's-foot, from its digital leaf, the bear-berry, or bear's-bilberry, from its fruit being a favourite food of bears, and the bear's-garlick. There is the bear's-breech, from its roughness, a name transferred by some mistake from the *Acanthus* to the cow-parsnip, and the bear's-wort, which it has been suggested "is rather to be derived from its use in uterine complaints than from the animal."

Among names in which the word cow figures may be mentioned the cow-bane, water-hemlock, from its supposed baneful effects upon cows, because, writes Withering, "early in the spring, when it grows in the water, cows often eat it, and are killed by it." Cockayne would derive cowslip from *cu*, cow, and *slyppe*, lip, and cow-wheat is so nicknamed from its seed resembling wheat, but being worthless as food for man. The flowers of the *Arum maculatum* are "bulls and cows;" and in Yorkshire the fruit of *Crataegus oxyacantha* is bull-horns;--an old name for the horse-leek being bullock's-eye.

Many curious names have resulted from the prefix pig, as in Sussex, where the bird's-foot trefoil is known as pig's-pettitoes; and in Devonshire the fruit of the dog-rose is pig's-noses. A Northamptonshire term for goose-grass (*Galium aparine*) is pig-tail, and the pig-nut (*Brunium flexuosum*) derived this name from its tubers being a favourite food of pigs, and resembling nuts in size and flavour. The common cyclamen is sow-head, and a popular name for the *Sonchus oleraceus* is sow-thistle. Among further names also associated with the sow may be included the sow-fennel, sow-grass, and sow-foot, while the sow-bane (*Chenopodium rubrum*), is so termed from being, as Parkinson tells us, "found certain to kill swine."

Among further animal prefixes may be noticed the wolfs-bane (*Aconitum napellus*), wolf's-claws (*Lycopodium clavatum*), wolf's-milk (*Euphorbia helioscopia*), and wolfs-thistle (*Carlina acaulis*). The mouse has given us numerous names, such as mouse-ear (*Hieracium pilosella*), mouse-grass (*Aira caryophyllea*), mouse-ear scorpion-grass (*Myosotis palustris*), mouse-tail (*Myosurus minimus*), and mouse-pea. The term rat-tail has been applied to several plants having a tail-like inflorescence, such as the *Plantago lanceolata* (ribwort plantain).

The term toad as a prefix, like that of dog, frequently means spurious, as in the toad-flax, a plant which, before it comes into flower, bears a tolerably close resemblance to a plant of the true flax. The frog, again, supplies names, such as frog's-lettuce, frog's-foot, frog-grass, and frog-cheese; while hedgehog gives us such names as hedgehog-parsley and hedgehog-grass.

Connected with the dragon we have the name dragon applied to the snake-weed (*Polygonum bistorta*), and dragon's-blood is one of the popular names of the Herb-Robert. The water-dragon is a nickname of the *Caltha palustris*, and dragon's-mouth of the *Digitalis purpurea*.

Once more, there is scorpion-grass and scorpion-wort, both of which refer to various species of *Myosotis*; snakes and vipers also adding to the list. Thus there is viper's-bugloss, and snake-weed. In Gloucestershire the fruit of the *Arum maculatum* is snake's-victuals, and snake's-head is a common name for the fritillary. There is the snake-skin willow and snake's-girdles;--snake's-tongue being a name given to the bane-wort (*Ranunculus flammula*).

Names in which the devil figures have been noticed elsewhere, as also those in which the words fairy and witch enter. As the authors, too, of the "Dictionary of Plant Names" have pointed out, a great number of names may be called dedicatory, and embody the names of many of the saints, and even of the Deity. The latter, however, are very few in number, owing perhaps to a sense of reverence, and "God Almighty's bread and cheese," "God's eye," "God's grace," "God's meat," "Our Lord's, or Our Saviour's flannel," "Christ's hair," "Christ's herb," "Christ's

ladder," "Christ's thorn," "Holy Ghost," and "Herb-Trinity," make up almost the whole list. On the other hand, the Virgin Mary has suggested numerous names, some of which we have noticed in the chapter on sacred plants. Certain of the saints, again, have perpetuated their names in our plant nomenclature, instances of which are scattered throughout the present volume.

Some plants, such as flea-bane and wolf's-bane, refer to the reputed property of the plant to keep off or injure the animal named,[5] and there is a long list of plants which derived their names from their real or imaginary medicinal virtues, many of which illustrate the old doctrine of signatures.

Birds, again, like animals, have suggested various names, and among some of the best-known ones may be mentioned the goose-foot, goose-grass, goose-tongue. Shakespeare speaks of cuckoo-buds, and there is cuckoo's-head, cuckoo-flower, and cuckoo-fruit, besides the stork's-bill and crane's-bill. Bees are not without their contingent of names; a popular name of the *Delphinium grandiflorum* being the bee-larkspur, "from the resemblance of the petals, which are studded with yellow hairs, to the humble-bee whose head is buried in the recesses of the flower." There is the bee-flower (*Ophrys apifera*), because the, "lip is in form and colour so like a bee, that any one unacquainted therewith would take it for a living bee sucking of the flower."

In addition to the various classes of names already mentioned, there are a rich and very varied assortment found in most counties throughout the country, many of which have originated in the most amusing and eccentric way. Thus "butter and eggs" and "eggs and bacon" are applied to several plants, from the two shades of yellow in the flower, and butter-churn to the *Nuphar luteum*, from the shape of the fruit. A popular term for *Nepeta glechoma* is "hen and chickens," and "cocks and hens" for the *Plantago lanceolata*. A Gloucestershire nickname for the *Plantago media* is fire-leaves, and the hearts'-ease has been honoured with all sorts of romantic names, such as "kiss me behind the garden gate;" and "none so pretty" is one of the popular names of the saxifrage. Among the names of the *Arum* may be noticed "parson in the pulpit," "cows and calves," "lords and ladies," and "wake-robin." The potato has a variety of names, such as leather-jackets, blue-eyes, and red-eyes.

A pretty name in Devonshire for the *Veronica chamcaedrys* is angel's-eyes:--

*"Around her hat a wreath was twined
Of blossoms, blue as southern skies;
I asked their name, and she replied,
We call them angel's-eyes."* [6]

In the northern counties the poplar, on account of its bitter bark, was termed the bitter-weed.[7]

*"Oak, ash, and elm-tree,
The laird can hang for a' the three;
But fir, saugh, and bitter-weed,
The laird may flyte, but make naething be' et."*

According to the compilers of "English Plant Names," "this name is assigned to no particular species of poplar, nor have we met with it elsewhere." The common Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum multiflorum*) has been nicknamed "David's harp,"[8] and, "appears to have arisen from the exact similarity of the outline of the bended stalk, with its pendent bill-like blossoms, to the drawings of monkish times in which King David is represented as seated before an instrument shaped like the half of a pointed arch, from which are suspended metal bells, which he strikes with two hammers."

In the neighbourhood of Torquay, fir-cones are designated oysters, and in Sussex the *Arabis* is called "snow-on-the-mountain," and "snow-in-summer." A Devonshire name for the sweet scabiosis is the mournful-widow, and in some places the red valerian (*Centranthus ruber*) is known as scarlet-lightning. A common name for *Achillaea ptarmica* is sneezewort, and the *Petasites vulgaris* has been designated "son before the father." The general name for *Drosera rotundifolia* is sundew, and in Gloucestershire the *Primula auricula* is the tanner's-apron. The *Viola tricolor* is often known as "three faces in a hood," and the *Aconitum napellus* as "Venus's chariot drawn by two doves." The *Stellaria holostea* is "lady's white petticoat," and the *Scandix pecten* is "old wife's darning-needles." One of the names of the Campion is plum-pudding, and "spittle of the stars" has been applied to the *Nostoc commune*. Without giving further instances of these odd plant names, we would conclude by quoting the following extract from the preface of Mr. Earle's charming little volume on "English Plant Names," a remark which, indeed, most equally applies to other sections of our subject beyond that of the present chapter:--"The fascination of plant names has its foundation in two instincts, love of Nature, and curiosity about Language. Plant names are often of the highest antiquity, and more or less common to the whole stream of related nations. Could we penetrate to the original suggestive idea that called forth the name, it would bring valuable information about the first openings of the human mind towards Nature; and the merest dream of such a discovery invests with a strange charm the words that could tell, if we could understand, so much of the forgotten infancy of the human race."

Footnotes:

1. "Dictionary of English Plant Names," by J. Britten and Robert Holland. 1886. 2. "English Plant Names," Introduction, p. xiii. 3. See Folkard's "Legends," p. 309; Friend's "Flowers and Flowerlore," ii. 401-5. 4. See "Flower-lore," p. 74. 5. Friend's "Flower-lore," ii. 425. 6. Garden, June 29, 1872. 7. Johnston's "Botany of Eastern Borders," 1853, p. 177. 8. Lady Wilkinson's "Weeds and Wild Flowers," p. 269.



CHAPTER XIV.

PLANT LANGUAGE.

Plant language, as expressive of the various traits of human character, can boast of a world-wide and antique history. It is not surprising that flowers, the varied and lovely productions of nature's dainty handiwork, should have been employed as symbolic emblems, and most aptly indicative oftentimes of what words when even most wisely chosen can ill convey; for as Tennyson remarks:--

*"Any man that walks the mead
In bud, or blade, or bloom, may find
A meaning suited to his mind."*

Hence, whether we turn to the pages of the Sacred Volume, or to the early Greek writings, we find the symbolism of flowers most eloquently illustrated, while Persian poetry is rich in allusions of the same kind. Indeed, as Mr. Ingram has remarked in his "Flora Symbolica,"[1]—Every age and every clime has promulgated its own peculiar system of floral signs, and it has been said that the language of flowers is as old as the days of Adam; having, also, thousands of years ago, existed in the Indian, Egyptian, and Chaldean civilisations which have long since passed away. He further adds how the Chinese, whose, "chronicles antedate the historic records of all other nations, seem to have had a simple but complete mode of communicating ideas by means of florigraphic signs;" whereas, "the monuments of the old Assyrian and Egyptian races bear upon their venerable surfaces a code of floral telegraphy whose hieroglyphical meaning is veiled or but dimly guessed at in our day." The subject is an extensive one, and also enters largely into the ceremonial use of flowers, many of which were purposely selected for certain rites from their long-established symbolical character. At the same time, it must be remembered that many plants have had a meaning attached to them by poets and others, who have by a license of their own made them to represent certain sentiments and ideas for which there is no authority save their own fancy.

Hence in numerous instances a meaning, wholly misleading, has been assigned to various plants, and has given rise to much confusion. This, too, it may be added, is the case in other countries as well as our own.

Furthermore, as M. de Gubernatis observes, "there exist a great number of books which pretend to explain the language of flowers,

wherein one may occasionally find a popular or traditional symbol; but, as a rule, these expressions are generally the wild fancies of the author himself." Hence, in dealing with plant language, one is confronted with a host of handbooks, many of which are not only inaccurate, but misleading. But in enumerating the recognised and well-known plants that have acquired a figurative meaning, it will be found that in a variety of cases this may be traced to their connection with some particular event in years past, and not to some chance or caprice, as some would make us believe. The amaranth, for instance, which is the emblem of immortality, received its name, "never-fading," from the Greeks on account of the lasting nature of its blossoms. Accordingly, Milton crowns with amaranth the angelic multitude assembled before the Deity:--

*"To the ground,
With solemn adoration, down they cast
Their crowns, inwove with amaranth and gold.
Immortal amaranth, a flower which once
In Paradise, fast by the tree of life,
Began to bloom; but soon, for man's offence,
To heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows
And flowers aloft, shading the font of life," &c.*

And in some parts of the Continent churches are adorned at Christmas-tide with the amaranth, as a symbol "of that immortality to which their faith bids them look."

Grass, from its many beneficial qualities, has been made the emblem of usefulness; and the ivy, from its persistent habit of clinging to the heaviest support, has been universally adopted as the symbol of confiding love and fidelity. Growing rapidly, it iron clasps:--

*"The fissured stone with its entwining arms,
And embowers with leaves for ever green,
And berries dark."*

According to a Cornish tradition, the beautiful Iseult, unable to endure the loss of her betrothed--the brave Tristran--died of a broken heart, and was buried in the same church, but, by order of the king, the two graves were placed at a distance from each other. Soon, however, there burst forth from the tomb of Tristran a branch of ivy, and another from the grave of Iseult; these shoots gradually growing upwards, until at last the lovers, represented by the clinging ivy, were again united beneath the vaulted roof of heaven.[2]

Then, again, the cypress, in floral language, denotes mourning; and, as an emblem of woe, may be traced to the familiar classical myth of Cyparissus, who, sorrow-stricken at having slain his favourite stag, was transformed into a cypress tree. Its ominous and sad character is the subject of constant allusion, Virgil having introduced it into the funeral rites of his heroes. Shelley speaks of the unwept youth whom no mourning maidens decked,

*"With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,
The love-couch of his everlasting sleep."*

And Byron describes the cypress as,

*"Dark tree! still sad when other's grief is fled,
The only constant mourner o'er the dead."*

The laurel, used for classic wreaths, has long been regarded emblematical of renown, and Tasso thus addresses a laurel leaf in the hair of his mistress:--

*"O glad triumphant bough,
That now adornest conquering chiefs, and now
Clipp'st the bows of over-ruling kings
From victory to victory.
Thus climbing on through all the heights of story,
From worth to worth, and glory unto glory,
To finish all, O gentle and royal tree,
Thou reignest now upon that flourishing head,
At whose triumphant eyes love and our souls are led."*

Like the rose, the myrtle is the emblem of love, having been dedicated by the Greeks and Romans to Venus, in the vicinity of whose temples myrtle-groves were planted; hence, from time immemorial,

"Sacred to Venus is the myrtle shade."

This will explain its frequent use in bridal ceremonies on the Continent, and its employment for the wedding wreath of the Jewish damsel. Herrick, mindful of its associations, thus apostrophises Venus:--

*"Goddess, I do love a girl,
Ruby lipp'd and toothed like pearl;
If so be I may but prove
Lucky in this maid I love,
I will promise there shall be*

Myrtles offered up to thee."

To the same goddess was dedicated the rose, and its world-wide reputation as "the flower of love," in which character it has been extolled by poets in ancient and modern times, needs no more than reference here.

The olive indicates peace, and as an emblem was given to Judith when she restored peace to the Israelites by the death of Holofernes.[3] Shakespeare, in "Twelfth Night" (Act i. sc. 5), makes Viola say:--"I bring no overture of war, no taxation of homage; I hold the olive in my hand; my words are as full of peace as of matter." Similarly, the palm, which, as the symbol of victory, was carried before the conqueror in triumphal processions, is generally regarded as denoting victory. Thus, palm-branches were scattered in the path of Christ upon His public entry into Jerusalem; and, at the present day, a palm-branch is embroidered on the lappet of the gown of a French professor, to indicate that a University degree has been attained.[4]

Some flowers have become emblematical from their curious characteristics. Thus, the balsam is held to be expressive of impatience, because its seed-pods when ripe curl up at the slightest touch, and dart forth their seeds, with great violence; hence one of its popular names, "touch-me-not." The wild anemone has been considered indicative of brevity, because its fragile blossom is so quickly scattered to the wind and lost:--

*"The winds forbid the flowers to flourish long,
Which owe to winds their name in Grecian song."*

The poppy, from its somniferous effects, has been made symbolic of sleep and oblivion; hence Virgil calls it the Lethean poppy, whilst our old pastoral poet, William Browne, speaks of it as "sleep-bringing poppy." The heliotrope denotes devoted attachment, from its having been supposed to turn continually towards the sun; hence its name, signifying the sun and to turn. The classic heliotrope must not be confounded with the well-known Peruvian heliotrope or "cherry-pie," a plant with small lilac-blue blossoms of a delicious fragrance. It would seem that many of the flowers which had the reputation of opening and shutting at the sun's bidding were known as heliotropes, or sunflowers, or turnesol. Shakespeare alludes to the,

*"Marigold, that goes to bed with the sun,
And with him rises weeping."*

And Moore, describing its faithful constancy, says:--

*"The sunflower turns on her god when he sets
The same look which she did when he rose."*

Such a flower, writes Mr. Ellacombe, was to old writers "the emblem of constancy in affection and sympathy in joy and sorrow," though it was also the emblem of the fawning courtier, who can only shine when everything is right. Anyhow, the so-called heliotrope was the subject of constant symbolic allusion:--

*"The flower, enamoured of the sun,
At his departure hangs her head and weeps,
And shrouds her sweetness up, and keeps
Sad vigils, like a cloistered nun,
Till his reviving ray appears,
Waking her beauty as he dries her tears." [5]*

The aspen, from its tremulous motion, has been made symbolical of fear. The restless movement of its leaves is "produced by the peculiar form of the foot-stalks, and, indeed, in some degree, the whole tribe of poplars are subject to have their leaves agitated by the slightest breeze." [6] Another meaning assigned to the aspen in floral language is scandal, from an old saying which affirmed that its tears were made from women's tongues--an allusion to which is made in the subjoined rhyme by P. Hannay in the year 1622:--

*"The quaking aspen, light and thin,
To the air quick passage gives;
Resembling still
The trembling ill
Of tongues of womankind,
Which never rest,
But still are prest
To wave with every wind."*

The almond, again, is regarded as expressive of haste, in reference to its hasty growth and early maturity; while the evening primrose, from the time of its blossoms expanding, indicates silent love--refraining from unclosing "her cup of paly gold until her lowly sisters are rocked into a balmy slumber." The bramble, from its manner of growth, has been chosen as the type of lowliness; and "from the fierceness with which it grasps the passer-by with its straggling prickly stems, as an emblem of remorse."

Fennel was in olden times generally considered an inflammatory herb, and hence to eat "conger and fennel" was to eat two high and hot things together, which was an act of libertinism. Thus in "2 Henry IV." (Act ii. sc. 4), Falstaff says of Poins, "He eats conger and fennel." Rosemary formerly had the reputation of strengthening the memory, and on this account was regarded as a symbol of remembrance. Thus, according to an old ballad:--

*"Rosemary is for remembrance
Between us day and night,
Wishing that I may always have
You present in my sight."*

And in "Hamlet," where Ophelia seems to be addressing Laertes, she says (Act iv. sc. 5):--

"There's rosemary, that's for remembrance."

Vervain, from time immemorial, has been the floral symbol of enchantment, owing to its having been in ancient times much in request for all kinds of divinations and incantations. Virgil, it may be remembered, alludes to this plant as one of the charms used by an enchantress:--

*"Bring running water, bind those altars round
With fillets, with vervain strew the ground."*

Parsley, according to floral language, has a double signification, denoting feasting and death. On festive occasions the Greeks wore wreaths of parsley, and on many other occasions it was employed, such as at the Isthmian games. On the other hand, this plant was strewn over the bodies of the dead, and decked their graves.

"The weeping willow," as Mr. Ingram remarks, "is one of those natural emblems which bear their florigraphical meaning so palpably impressed that their signification is clear at first sight." This tree has always been regarded as the symbol of sorrow, and also of forsaken love. In China it is employed in several rites, having from a remote period been regarded as a token of immortality. As a symbol of bitterness the aloe has long been in repute, and "as bitter as aloes" is a proverbial expression, doubtless derived from the acid taste of its juice. Eastern poets frequently speak of this plant as the emblem of bitterness; a meaning which most fitly coincides with its properties. The lily of the valley has had several emblems conferred upon it, each of which is equally apposite. Thus in reference to the bright hopeful season of

spring, in which it blossoms, it has been regarded as symbolical of the return of happiness, whilst its delicate perfume has long been indicative of sweetness, a characteristic thus beautifully described by Keats:--

*"No flower amid the garden fairer grows
Than the sweet lily of the lowly vale,
The queen of flowers."*

Its perfect snow-white flower is the emblem of purity, allusions to which we find numerous scattered in the literature of the past. One of the emblems of the white poplar in floral language is time, because its leaves appear always in motion, and "being of a dead blackish-green above, and white below," writes Mr. Ingram, "they were deemed by the ancients to indicate the alternation of night and day." Again, the plane-tree has been from early times made the symbol of genius and magnificence; for in olden times philosophers taught beneath its branches, which acquired for it a reputation as one of the seats of learning. From its beauty and size it obtained a figurative meaning; and the arbutus or strawberry-tree (*Arbutus unedo*) is the symbol of inseparable love, and the narcissus denotes self-love, from the story of Narcissus, who, enamoured of his own beauty, became spell-bound to the spot, where he pined to death. Shelley describes it as one of the flowers growing with the sensitive plant in that garden where:--

*"The pied wind flowers and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die at their own dear loveliness."*

The sycamore implies curiosity, from Zacchaeus, who climbed up into this tree to witness the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem; and from time immemorial the violet has been the emblem of constancy:--

*"Violet is for faithfulness,
Which in me shall abide,
Hoping likewise that from your heart
You will not let it hide."*

In some cases flowers seem to have derived their symbolism from certain events associated with them. Thus the periwinkle signifies "early recollections, or pleasures of memory," in connection with which Rousseau tells us how, as Madame Warens and himself were proceeding to Charmattes, she was struck by the appearance of some of these blue

flowers in the hedge, and exclaimed, "Here is the periwinkle still in flower."

Thirty years afterwards the sight of the periwinkle in flower carried his memory back to this occasion, and he inadvertently cried, "Ah, there is the periwinkle." Incidents of the kind have originated many of the symbols found in plant language, and at the same time invested them with a peculiar historic interest.

Once more, plant language, it has been remarked, is one of those binding links which connects the sentiments and feelings of one country with another; although it may be, in other respects, these communities have little in common. Thus, as Mr. Ingram remarks in the introduction to his "Flora Symbolica" (p. 12), "from the unlettered North American Indian to the highly polished Parisian; from the days of dawning among the mighty Asiatic races, whose very names are buried in oblivion, down to the present times, the symbolism of flowers is everywhere and in all ages discovered permeating all strata of society. It has been, and still is, the habit of many peoples to name the different portions of the year after the most prominent changes of the vegetable kingdom."

In the United States, the language of flowers is said to have more votaries than in any other part of the world, many works relative to which have been published in recent years. Indeed, the subject will always be a popular one; for further details illustrative of which the reader would do well to consult Mr. H.G. Adams's useful work on the "Moral Language and Poetry of Flowers," not to mention the constant allusions scattered throughout the works of our old poets, such as Shakespeare, Chaucer, and Drayton.

Footnotes: 1. Introduction, p. 12. 2. Folkard's "Plant Legends," p. 389. 3. See Judith xv. 13. 4. "Flower-lore," pp. 197-198. 5. "Plant-lore of Shakespeare." 6. "Flower-lore," p. 168.

CHAPTER XV.

FABULOUS PLANTS.

The curious traditions of imaginary plants found amongst most nations have partly a purely mythological origin. Frequently, too, they may be attributed to the exaggerated accounts given by old travellers, who, "influenced by a desire to make themselves famous, have gone so far as to pretend that they saw these fancied objects." Anyhow, from whatever source sprung, these productions of ignorance and superstition have from a very early period been firmly credited. But, like the accounts given us of fabulous animals, they have long ago been acknowledged as survivals of popular errors, which owed their existence to the absence of botanical knowledge.

We have elsewhere referred to the great world tree, and of the primitive idea of a human descent from trees. Indeed, according to the early and uncultured belief of certain communities, there were various kinds of animal-producing trees, accounts of which are very curious. Among these may be mentioned the vegetable lamb, concerning which olden writers have given the most marvellous description. Thus Sir John Maundeville, who in his "Voyage and Travel" has recorded many marvellous sights which either came under his notice, or were reported to him during his travels, has not omitted to speak of this remarkable tree. Thus, to quote his words:--"There groweth a manner of fruit as though it were gourdes; and when they be ripe men cut them in two, and men find within a little beast, in flesh, in bone, and blood--as though it were a little lamb withouten wolfe--and men eat both the fruit and the beast, and that is a great marvel; of that fruit I have eaten although it were wonderful; but that I know well that God is marvellous in His works." Various accounts have been given of this wondrous plant, and in Parkinson's "Paradisus" it is represented as one of the plants which grew in the Garden of Eden. Its local name is the Scythian or Tartarian Lamb; and, as it grows, it might at a short distance be taken for an animal rather than a vegetable production. It is one of the genus *Polypodium*; root decumbent, thickly clothed with a very soft close hoar, of a deep yellow colour. It is also called by the Tartars "Barometz," and a Chinese nickname is "Rufous dog." Mr. Bell, in his "Journey to Ispahan," thus describes a specimen which he saw:--"It seemed to be made by art to imitate a lamb. It is said to eat up and devour all the grass and weeds within its reach. Though it may be thought that an opinion so very absurd could never find credit with people of the meanest understanding, yet I have conversed with some who were much inclined

to believe it; so very prevalent is the prodigious and absurd with some part of mankind. Among the more sensible and experienced Tartars, I found they laughed at it as a ridiculous fable." Blood was said to flow from it when cut or injured, a superstition which probably originated in the fact that the fresh root when cut yields a tenacious gum like the blood of animals. Dr. Darwin, in his "Lives of the Plants," adopts the fable thus:--

*"E'en round the pole the flames of love aspire,
And icy bosoms feel the sacred fire,
Cradled in snow, and fanned by arctic air,
Shines, gentle Barometz, the golden hair;
Rested in earth, each cloven hoof descends,
And round and round her flexile neck she bends.
Crops of the grey coral moss, and hoary thyme,
Or laps with rosy tongue the melting rime,
Eyes with mute tenderness her distant dam,
Or seems to bleat a vegetable lamb."*

Another curious fiction prevalent in olden times was that of the barnacle-tree, to which Sir John Maundeville also alludes:--"In our country were trees that bear a fruit that becomes flying birds; those that fell in the water lived, and those that fell on the earth died, and these be right good for man's meat." As early as the twelfth century this idea was promulgated by Giraldus Cambrensis in his "Topographia Hiberniae;" and Gerard in his "Herball, or General History of Plants," published in the year 1597, narrates the following:--"There are found in the north parts of Scotland, and the isles adjacent, called Orcades, certain trees, whereon do grow small fishes, of a white colour, tending to russet, wherein are contained little living creatures; which shells, in time of maturity, do open, and out of them grow those little living things which, falling into the water, do become fowls, whom we call barnacles, in the north of England brant-geese, and in Lancashire tree-geese; but the others that do fall upon the land perish, and do come to nothing." But, like many other popular fictions, this notion was founded on truth, and probably originated in mistaking the fleshy peduncle of the barnacle (*Lepas analifera*) for the neck of a goose, the shell for its head, and the tentacula for a tuft of feather. There were many versions of this eccentric myth, and according to one modification given by Boëce, the oldest Scottish historian, these barnacle-geese are first produced in the form of worms in old trees, and further adds that such a tree was cast on shore in the year 1480, when there appeared, on its being sawn asunder, a multitude of worms, "throwing themselves out of sundry holes and pores of the tree; some of them were nude, as they were new shapen; some had both

head, feet, and wings, but they had no feathers; some of them were perfect shapen fowls. At last, the people having this tree each day in more admiration, brought it to the kirk of St. Andrew's, beside the town of Tyre, where it yet remains to our day."

Du Bartas thus describes the various transformations of this bird:--

*"So, slowe Boôtes underneath him sees,
In th' ycie iles, those goslings hatcht of trees;
Whose fruitful leaves, falling into the water,
Are turn'd, they say, to living fowls soon after.*

*So, rotten sides of broken ships do change
To barnacles; O transformation change,
'Twas first a green tree, then a gallant hull,
Lately a mushroom, now a flying gull."*

Meyer wrote a treatise on this strange "bird without father or mother," and Sir Robert Murray, in the "Philosophical Transactions," says that, "these shells are hung at the tree by a neck, longer than the shell, of a filmy substance, round and hollow and creased, not unlike the windpipe of a chicken, spreading out broadest where it is fastened to the tree, from which it seems to draw and convey the matter which serves for the growth and vegetation of the shell and the little bird within it. In every shell that I opened," he adds, "I found a perfect sea-fowl; the little bill like that of a goose, the eyes marked; the head, neck, breast, wing, tail, and feet formed; the feathers everywhere perfectly shaped, and the feet like those of other water-fowl." The Chinese have a tradition of certain trees, the leaves of which were finally changed into birds.

With this story may be compared that of the oyster-bearing tree, which Bishop Fleetwood describes in his "Curiosities of Agriculture and Gardening," written in the year 1707. The oysters as seen, he says, by the Dominican Du Tertre, at Guadaloupe, grew on the branches of trees, and, "are not larger than the little English oysters, that is to say, about the size of a crown-piece. They stick to the branches that hang in the water of a tree called Paretuvier. No doubt the seed of the oysters, which is shed in the tree when they spawn, cleaves to those branches, so that the oysters form themselves there, and grow bigger in process of time, and by their weight bend down the branches into the sea, and then are refreshed twice a day by the flux and reflux of it." Kircher speaks of a tree in Chili, the leaves of which brought forth a certain kind of worm, which eventually became changed into serpents; and describes a plant which grew in the Molucca Islands, nicknamed "catopa," on account of its leaves when falling off being transformed into butterflies.

Among some of the many other equally wonderful plants may be mentioned the "stony wood," which is thus described by Gerard:-- "Being at Rugby, about such time as our fantastic people did with great concourse and multitudes repair and run headlong unto the sacred wells of Newnam Regis, in the edge of Warwickshire, as unto the Waters of Life, which could cure all diseases." He visited these healing-wells, where he, "found growing over the same a fair ash-tree, whose boughs did hang over the spring of water, whereof some that were seare and rotten, and some that of purpose were broken off, fell into the water and were all turned into stone. Of these, boughs, or parts of the tree, I brought into London, which, when I had broken into pieces, therein might be seen that the pith and all the rest was turned into stones, still remaining the same shape and fashion that they were of before they were in the water." Similarly, Sir John Maundeville notices the "Dead Sea fruit"—fruit found on the apple-trees near the Dead Sea. To quote his own words:-- "There be full fair apples, and fair of colour to behold; but whoso breaketh them or cutteth them in two, he shall find within them coals and cinders, in token that by the wrath of God, the city and the land were burnt and sunken into hell." Speaking of the many legendary tales connected with the apple, may be mentioned the golden apples which Hera received at her marriage with Zeus, and placed under the guardianship of the dragon Ladon, in the garden of the Hesperides. The northern Iduna kept guarded the sacred apples which, by a touch, restored the aged gods to youth; and according to Sir J. Maundeville, the apples of Pyban fed the pigmies with their smell only. This reminds us of the singing apple in the fairy romance, which would persuade by its smell alone, and enable the possessor to write poetry or prose, and to display the most accomplished wit; and of the singing tree in the "Arabian Nights," each leaf of which was musical, all the leaves joining together in a delightful harmony.

But peculiarities of this kind are very varied, and form an extensive section in "Plant-lore;"--very many curious examples being found in old travels, and related with every semblance of truth. In some instances trees have obtained a fabulous character from being connected with certain events. Thus there was the "bleeding tree." [1] It appears that one of the indictments laid to the charge of the Marquis of Argyll was this:-- "That a tree on which thirty-six of his enemies were hanged was immediately blasted, and when hewn down, a copious stream of blood ran from it, saturating the earth, and that blood for several years was emitted from the roots." Then there is the "poet's tree," which grows over the tomb of Tan-Sein, a musician at the court of Mohammed Akbar. Whoever chews a leaf of this tree was long said to be inspired with sweet melody of voice, an allusion to which is made by Moore, in "Lalla

Kookh:"--"His voice was sweet, as if he had chewed the leaves of that enchanted tree which grows over the tomb of the musician Tan-Sein."

The rare but occasional occurrence of vegetation in certain trees and shrubs, happening to take place at the period of Christ's birth, gave rise to the belief that such trees threw out their leaves with a holy joy to commemorate that anniversary. An oak of the early budding species

for two centuries enjoyed such a notoriety, having been said to shoot forth its leaves on old Christmas Day, no leaf being seen either before or after that day during winter. There was the famous Glastonbury thorn, and in the same locality a walnut tree was reported never to put forth its leaves before the feast of St. Barnabas, the 11th June. The monkish legend runs thus: Joseph of Arimathaea, after landing at no great distance from Glastonbury, walked to a hill about a mile from the town. Being weary he sat down here with his companions, the hill henceforth being nicknamed "Weary-All-Hill," locally abbreviated into "Werral." Whilst resting Joseph struck his staff into the ground, which took root, grew, and blossomed every Christmas Day. Previous to the time of Charles I a branch of this famous tree was carried in procession, with much ceremony, at Christmas time, but during the Civil War the tree was cut down. Many plants, again, as the "Sesame" of the "Arabian Nights," had the power of opening doors and procuring an entrance into caverns and mountain sides--a survival of which we find in the primrose or key-flower of German legend. Similarly, other plants, such as the golden-rod, have been renowned for pointing to hidden springs of water, and revealing treasures of gold and silver. Such fabulous properties have been also assigned to the hazel-branch, popularly designated the divining-rod:--

*"Some sorcerers do boast they have a rod,
Gather'd with vows and sacrifice,
And, borne aloft, will strangely nod
The hidden treasure where it lies."*

With plants of the kind we may compare the wonder-working moonwort (*Botrychium lunaria*), which was said to open locks and to unshoe horses that trod on it, a notion which Du Bartas thus mentions in his "Divine Weekes"--

*"Horses that, feeding on the grassy hills,
Tread upon moonwort with their hollow heels,
Though lately shod, at night go barefoot home,
Their maister musing where their shoes become.
O moonwort! tell me where thou bid'st the smith,
Hammer and pinchers, thou unshodd'st them with."*

*Alas! what lock or iron engine is't,
That can thy subtle secret strength resist,
Still the best farrier cannot set a shoe
So sure, but thou (so shortly) canst undo."*

The blasting-root, known in Germany as spring-wurzel, and by us as spring-wort, possesses similar virtues, for whatever lock is touched by it must yield. It is no easy matter to find this magic plant, but, according to a piece of popular folk-lore, it is obtained by means of the woodpecker. When this bird visits its nest, it must have been previously plugged up with wood, to remove which it goes in search of the spring-wort. On holding this before the nest the wood shoots out from the tree as if driven by the most violent force. Meanwhile, a red cloth must be placed near the nest, which will so scare the woodpecker that it will let the fabulous root drop. There are several versions of this tradition. According to Pliny the bird is the raven; in Swabia it is the hoopoe, and in Switzerland the swallow. In Russia, there is a plant growing in marshy land, known as the rasir-trava, which when applied to locks causes them to open instantly. In Iceland similar properties are ascribed to the herb-paris, there known as lasa-grass.

According to a piece of Breton lore, the selago, or "cloth of gold," cannot be cut with steel without the sky darkening and some disaster taking place:--

*"The herb of gold is cut; a cloud
Across the sky hath spread its shroud
To war."*

On the other hand, if properly gathered with due ceremony, it conferred the power of understanding the language of beast or bird.[2] As far back as the time of Pliny, we have directions for the gathering of this magic plant. The person plucking it was to go barefoot, with feet washed, clad in white, after having offered a sacrifice of bread and wine. Another plant which had to be gathered with special formalities was the magic mandragora. It was commonly reported to shriek in such a hideous manner when pulled out of the earth that,

"Living mortals hearing them run mad."

Hence, various precautions were adopted. According to Pliny, "When they intended to take up the root of this plant, they took the wind thereof, and with a sword describing three circles about it, they digged it up, looking towards the west." Another old authority informs us that he "Who would take it up, in common prudence should tie a dog to it to

accomplish his purpose, as if he did it himself, he would shortly die." Moore gives this warning:--

*"The phantom shapes--oh, touch them not
That appal the maiden's sight,
Look in the fleshy mandrake's stem,
That shrieks when plucked at night."*

To quote one or two more illustrations, we may mention the famous lily at Lauenberg, which is said to have sprung up when a poor and beautiful girl was spirited away out of the clutches of a dissolute baron. It made its appearance annually, an event which was awaited with much interest by the inhabitants of the Hartz, many of whom made a pilgrimage to behold it. "They returned to their homes," it is said, "overpowered by its dazzling beauty, and asserting that its splendour was so great that it shed beams of light on the valley below." Similarly, we are told how the common break-fern flowers but once a year, at midnight, on Michaelmas Eve, when it displays a small blue flower, which vanishes at the approach of dawn. According to a piece of folklore current in Bohemia and the Tyrol, the fern-seed shines like glittering gold at the season, so that there is no chance of missing its appearance, especially as it has its sundry mystic properties which are described elsewhere.

Professor Mannhardt relates a strange legend current in Mecklenburg to the effect that in a certain secluded and barren spot, where a murder had been committed, there grows up every day at noon a peculiarly-shaped thistle, unlike any other of its kind. On inspection there are to be seen human arms, hands, and heads, and as soon as twelve heads have appeared, the weird plant vanishes. It is further added that on one occasion a shepherd happened to pass the mysterious spot where the thistle was growing, when instantly his arms were paralysed and his staff became tinder. Accounts of these fabulous trees and plants have in years gone been very numerous, and have not yet wholly died out, surviving in the legendary tales of most countries. In some instances, too, it would seem that certain trees like animals have gained a notoriety, purely fabulous, through trickery and credulity. About the middle of the last century, for instance, there was the groaning-tree at Badesly, which created considerable sensation. It appears that a cottager, who lived in the village of Badesly, two miles from Lymington, frequently heard a strange noise behind his house, like a person in extreme agony. For about twenty months this tree was an object of astonishment, and at last the owner of the tree, in order to discover the cause of its supposed sufferings, bored a hole in the trunk. After this operation it ceased to groan, it was rooted up, but nothing appeared to account for its strange

peculiarity. Stories of this kind remind us of similar wonders recorded by Sir John Maundeville, as having been seen by him in the course of his Eastern travels. Thus he describes a certain table of ebony or blackwood, "that once used to turn into flesh on certain occasions, but whence now drops only oil, which, if kept above a year, becomes good flesh and bone."

Footnotes:

1. Laing's "History of Scotland," 1800, ii. p. II. 2. "Flower-lore," p. 46.



CHAPTER XVI.

DOCTRINE OF SIGNATURES.

The old medical theory, which supposed that plants by their external character indicated the particular diseases for which Nature had intended them as remedies, was simply a development of the much older notion of a real connection between object and image. Thus, on this principle, it was asserted that the properties of substances were frequently denoted by their colour; hence, white was regarded as refrigerant, and red as hot. In the same way, for disorders of the blood, burnt purple, pomegranate seeds, mulberries, and other red ingredients were dissolved in the patient's drink; and for liver omplaints yellow substances were recommended. But this fanciful and erroneous notion "led to serious errors in practice," [1] and was occasionally productive of the most fatal results. Although, indeed, Pliny spoke of the folly of the magicians in using the catanance (Greek: katanhankae, compulsion) for love-potions, on account of its shrinking "in drying into the shape of the claws of a dead kite," [2] and so holding the patient fast; yet this primitive idea, after the lapse of centuries, was as fully credited as in the early days when it was originally started. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for instance, it is noticed in most medical works, and in many cases treated with a seriousness characteristic of the backward state of medical science even at a period so comparatively recent. Crollius wrote a work on the subject; and Langham, in his "Garden of Health," published in the year 1578, accepted the doctrine. Coles, in his "Art of Simpling" (1656), thus describes it:--

"Though sin and Satan have plunged mankind into an ocean of infirmities, yet the mercy of God, which is over all His workes, maketh grasse to growe upon the mountains and herbes for the use of men, and hath not only stamped upon them a distinct forme, but also given them particular signatures, whereby a man may read even in legible characters the use of them."

John Ray, in his treatise on "The Wisdom of God in Creation," was among the first to express his disbelief of this idea, and writes:--"As for the signatures of plants, or the notes impressed upon them as notices of their virtues, some lay great stress upon them, accounting them strong arguments to prove that some understanding principle is the highest original of the work of Nature, as indeed they were could it be certainly made to appear that there were such marks designedly set upon them, because all that I find mentioned by authors seem to be rather fancied by

men than designed by Nature to signify, or point out, any such virtues, or qualities, as they would make us believe." His views, however, are somewhat contradictory, inasmuch as he goes on to say that, "the noxious and malignant plants do, many of them, discover something of their nature by the sad and melancholick visage of their leaves, flowers, or fruit. And that I may not leave that head wholly untouched, one observation I shall add relating to the virtues of plants, in which I think there is something of truth--that is, that there are of the wise dispensation of Providence such species of plants produced in every country as are made proper and convenient for the meat and medicine of the men and animals that are bred and inhabit therein." Indeed, however much many of the botanists of bygone centuries might try to discredit this popular delusion, they do not seem to have been wholly free from its influence themselves. Some estimate, also, of the prominence which the doctrine of signatures obtained may be gathered from the frequent allusions to it in the literature of the period. Thus, to take one illustration, the euphrasia or eye-bright (*Euphrasia officinalis*), which was, and is, supposed to be good for the eye, owing to a black pupil-like spot in its corolla, is noticed by Milton, who, it may be remembered, represents the archangel as clearing the vision of our first parents by its means:--

*"Then purged with euphrasy and rue
His visual orbs, for he had much to see."*

Spenser speaks of it in the same strain:--

*"Yet euphrasie may not be left unsung,
That gives dim eyes to wander leagues around."*

And Thomson says:--

*"If she, whom I implore, Urania, deign
With euphrasy to purge away the mists,
Which, humid, dim the mirror of the mind."*

With reference to its use in modern times, Anne Pratt[3] tells us how, "on going into a small shop in Dover, she saw a quantity of the plant suspended from the ceiling, and was informed that it was gathered and dried as being good for weak eyes;" and in many of our rural districts I learn that the same value is still attached to it by the peasantry.

Again, it is interesting to observe how, under a variety of forms, this piece of superstition has prevailed in different parts of the world. By virtue of a similar association of ideas, for instance, the gin-seng [4] was

said by the Chinese and North American Indians to possess certain virtues which were deduced from the shape of the root, supposed to resemble the human body [5]--a plant with which may be compared our mandrake. The Romans of old had their rock-breaking plant called "saxifraga" or sassafra; [6] and we know in later times how the granulated roots of our white meadow saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*), resembling small stones, were supposed to indicate its efficacy in the cure of calculous complaints. Hence one of its names, stonebreak. The stony seeds of the gromwell were, also, used in cases of stone--a plant formerly known as lichwale, or, as in a MS. of the fifteenth century, lythewale, stone-switch. [7]

In accordance, also, with the same principle it was once generally believed that the seeds of ferns were of an invisible sort, and hence, by a transference of properties, it came to be admitted that the possessor of fern-seed could likewise be invisible--a notion which obtained an extensive currency on the Continent. As special good-luck was said to attend the individual who succeeded in obtaining this mystic seed, it was eagerly sought for--Midsummer Eve being one of the occasions when it could be most easily procured. Thus Grimm, in his "Teutonic Mythology," [8] relates how a man in Westphalia was looking on Midsummer night for a foal he had lost, and happened to pass through a meadow just as the fern-seed was ripening, so that it fell into his shoes. In the morning he went home, walked into the sitting-room and sat down, but thought it strange that neither his wife nor any of the family took the least notice of him. "I have not found the foal," said he. Thereupon everybody in the room started and looked alarmed, for they heard his voice but saw him not. His wife then called him, thinking he must have hid himself, but he only replied, "Why do you call me? Here I am right before you." At last he became aware that he was invisible, and, remembering how he had walked in the meadow on the preceding evening, it struck him that he might possibly have fern-seed in his shoes. So he took them off, and as he shook them the fern-seed dropped out, and he was no longer invisible. There are numerous stories of this kind; and, according to Dr. Kuhn, one method for obtaining the fern-seed was, at the summer solstice, to shoot at the sun when it had attained its midday height. If this were done, three drops of blood would fall, which were to be gathered up and preserved--this being the fern-seed. In Bohemia, [9] on old St. John's Night (July 8), one must lay a communion chalice-cloth under the fern, and collect the seed which will fall before sunrise. Among some of the scattered allusions to this piece of folk-lore in the literature of our own country, may be mentioned one by Shakespeare in "I Henry IV." (ii. 1):--

"Gadshill. *We have the receipt of fern-seed, we walk invisible*---[10]

"Chamberlain. Nay, by my faith, I think you are more beholding to the night than to fern-seed for your walking invisible."

In Ben Jonson's "New Inn" (i. 1), it is thus noticed:--

*"I had
No medicine, sir, to go invisible,
No fern-seed in my pocket."*

Brand [11] was told by an inhabitant of Heston, in Middlesex, that when he was a young man he was often present at the ceremony of catching the fern-seed at midnight, on the eve of St. John Baptist. The attempt was frequently unsuccessful, for the seed was to fall into a plate of its own accord, and that too without shaking the plate. It is unnecessary to add further illustrations on this point, as we have had occasion to speak elsewhere of the sundry other magical properties ascribed to the fern-seed, whereby it has been prominently classed amongst the mystic plants. But, apart from the doctrine of signatures, it would seem that the fern-seed was also supposed to derive its power of making invisible from the cloud, says Mr. Kelly, [12] "that contained the heavenly fire from which the plant is sprung." Whilst speaking, too, of the fern-seed's property of making people invisible, it is of interest to note that in the Icelandic and Pomeranian myths the schamir or "raven-stone" renders its possessor invisible; and according to a North German tradition the luck-flower is enbued with the same wonderful qualities. It is essential, however, that the flower be found by accident, for he who seeks it never finds it. In Sweden hazel-nuts are reputed to have the power of making invisible, and from their reputed magical properties have been, from time immemorial, in great demand for divination. All those plants whose leaves bore a fancied resemblance to the moon were, in days of old, regarded with superstitious reverence. The moon-daisy, the type of a class of plants resembling the pictures of a full moon, were exhibited, says Dr. Prior, "in uterine complaints, and dedicated in pagan times to the goddess of the moon." The moonwort (*Botrychium lunaria*), often confounded with the common "honesty" (*Lunaria biennis*) of our gardens, so called from the semi-lunar shape of the segments of its frond, was credited with the most curious properties, the old alchemists affirming that it was good among other things for converting quicksilver into pure silver, and unshoeing such horses as trod upon it. A similar virtue was ascribed to the horse-shoe vetch (*Hippocrepis comosa*), so called from the shape of the legumes, hence another of its mystic nicknames was "unshoe the horse."

But referring to the doctrine of signatures in folk-medicine, a favourite garden flower is Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum multiflorum*). On cutting the roots transversely, some marks are apparent not unlike the characters of a seal, which to the old herbalists indicated its use as a seal for wounds. [13] Gerarde, describing it, tells us how, "the root of Solomon's seal stamped, while it is fresh and greene, and applied, taketh away in one night, or two at the most, any bruise, black or blue spots, gotten by falls, or women's wilfulness in stumbling upon their hasty husbands' fists." For the same reason it was called by the French herbalists "l'herbe de la rupture." The specific name of the tutsan [14] (*Hypericum androsoemum*), derived from the two Greek words signifying man and blood, in reference to the dark red juice which exudes from the capsules when bruised, was once applied to external wounds, and hence it was called "balm of the warrior's wound," or "all-heal." Gerarde says, "The leaves laid upon broken skins and scabbed legs heal them, and many other hurts and griefs, whereof it took its name 'toute-saine' of healing all things." The pretty plant, herb-robert (*Geranium robertianum*), was supposed to possess similar virtues, its power to arrest bleeding being indicated by the beautiful red hue assumed by the fading leaves, on account of which property it was styled "a stauncher of blood." The garden Jerusalem cowslip (*Pulmonaria officinalis*) owes its English name, lungwort, to the spotting of the leaves, which were said to indicate that they would be efficacious in healing diseases of the lungs. Then there is the water-soldier (*Stratiotes aloides*), which from its sword-shaped leaves was reckoned among the appliances for gun-shot wounds. Another familiar plant which has long had a reputation as a vulnerary is the self-heal, or carpenter's herb (*Prunella vulgaris*), on account of its corolla being shaped like a bill-hook.

Again, presumably on the doctrine of signatures, the connection between roses and blood is very curious. Thus in France, Germany, and Italy it is a popular notion that if one is desirous of having ruddy cheeks, he must bury a drop of his blood under a rose-bush. [15] As a charm against haemorrhage of every kind, the rose has long been a favourite remedy in Germany, and in Westphalia the following formula is employed: "Abek, Wabek, Fabek; in Christ's garden stand three red roses--one for the good God, the other for God's blood, the third for the angel Gabriel: blood, I pray you, cease to flow." Another version of this charm is the following [16]:--"On the head of our Lord God there bloom three roses: the first is His virtue, the second is His youth, the third is His will. Blood, stand thou in the wound still, so that thou neither sore nor abscess givest."

Turning to some of the numerous plants which on the doctrine of signatures were formerly used as specifics from a fancied resemblance, in the shape of the root, leaf, or fruit, to any particular part of the human

body, we are confronted with a list adapted for most of the ills to which the flesh is heir. [17] Thus, the walnut was regarded as clearly good for mental cases from its bearing the signature of the whole head; the outward green cortex answering to the pericranium, the harder shell within representing the skull, and the kernel in its figure resembling the cover of the brain. On this account the outside shell was considered good for wounds of the head, whilst the bark of the tree was regarded as a sovereign remedy for the ringworm. [18] Its leaves, too, when bruised and moistened with vinegar were used for ear-ache. For scrofulous glands, the knotty tubers attached to the kernel-wort (*Scrophularia nodosa*) have been considered efficacious. The pith of the elder, when pressed with the fingers, "doth pit and receive the impress of them thereon, as the legs and feet of dropsical persons do," Therefore the juice of this tree was reckoned a cure for dropsy. Our Lady's thistle (*Cardmis Marianus*), from its numerous prickles, was recommended for stitches of the side; and nettle-tea is still a common remedy with many of our peasantry for nettle-rash. The leaves of the wood-sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) were believed to preserve the heart from many diseases, from their being "broad at the ends, cut in the middle, and sharp towards the stalk." Similarly the heart-trefoil, or clover (*Medicago maculata*), was so called, because, says Coles in his "Art of Simpling," "not only is the leaf triangular like the heart of a man, but also because each leaf contains the perfect image of an heart, and that in its proper colour--a flesh colour. It defendeth the heart against the noisome vapour of the spleen." Another plant which, on the same principle, was reckoned as a curative for heart-disease, is the heart's-ease, a term meaning a cordial, as in Sir Walter Scott's "Antiquary" (chap. xi.), "try a dram to be eilding and claise, and a supper and heart's-ease into the bargain." The knot-grass (*Polygonum aviculare*), with its reddish-white flowers and trailing pointed stems, was probably so called "from some unrecorded character by the doctrine of signatures," Suggests Mr. Ellacombe, [19] that it would stop the growth of children. Thus Shakespeare, in his "Midsummer Night's Dream" (Act iii. sc. 2), alludes to it as the "hinderin knot-grass," and in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Coxcomb" (Act ii. sc. 2) it is further mentioned:--

*"We want a boy extremely for this function,
Kept under for a year with milk and knot-grass."*

According to Crollius, the woody scales of which the cones of the pine-tree are composed "resemble the fore-teeth;" hence pine-leaves boiled in vinegar were used as a garlic for the relief of toothache. White-coral, from its resemblance to the teeth, was also in requisition, because "it keepeth children to heed their teeth, their gums being rubbed

therewith." For improving the complexion, an ointment made of cowslip-flowers was once recommended, because, as an old writer observes, it "taketh away the spots and wrinkles of the skin, and adds beauty exceedingly." Mr. Burgess, in his handy little volume on "English Wild Flowers" (1868, 47), referring to the cowslip, says, "the village damsels use it as a cosmetic, and we know it adds to the beauty of the complexion of the town-immured lassie when she searches for and gathers it herself in the early spring morning." Some of the old herbalists speak of moss gathered from a skull as useful for disorders of the head, and hence it was gathered and preserved.

The rupture-wort (*Herniaria glabra*) was so called from its fancied remedial powers, and the scabious in allusion to the scaly pappus of its seeds, which led to its use in leprous diseases. The well-known fern, spleen-wort (*Asplenium*), had this name applied to it from the lobular form of the leaf, which suggested it as a remedy for diseases of the spleen. Another of its nicknames is miltwaste, because:--

*"The finger-ferne, which being given to swine,
It makes their milt to melt away in fine--"*

A superstition which seems to have originated in a curious statement made by Vitruvius, that in certain localities in the island of Crete the flocks and herds were found without spleen from their browsing on this plant, whereas in those districts in which it did not grow the reverse was the case. [20]

The yellow bark of the berberry-tree (*Berberis vulgaris*), [21] when taken as a decoction in ale, or white wine, is said to be a purgative, and to have proved highly efficacious in the case of jaundice, hence in some parts of the country it is known as the "jaundice-berry." Turmeric, too, was formerly prescribed--a plant used for making a yellow dye; [22] and celandine, with its yellow juice, was once equally in repute. Similar remedies we find recommended on the Continent, and in Westphalia an apple mixed with saffron is a popular curative against jaundice. [23] Rhubarb, too, we are told, by the doctrine of signatures, was the "life, soul, heart, and treacle of the liver." Mr. Folkard [24] mentions a curious superstition which exists in the neighbourhood of Orleans, where a seventh son without a daughter intervening is called a Marcon. It is believed that, "the Marcon's body is marked somewhere with a Fleur-de-Lis, and that if a patient suffering under king's-evil touch this Fleur-de-Lis, or if the Marcon breathe upon him, the malady will be sure to disappear."

As shaking is one of the chief characteristics of that tedious and obstinate complaint ague, so there was a prevalent notion that the quaking-grass (*Briza media*), when dried and kept in the house, acted as

a most powerful deterrent. For the same reason, the aspen, from its constant trembling, has been held a specific for this disease. The lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*) is known in many country places as the pilewort, because its peculiar tuberous root was long thought to be efficacious as a remedial agent. And Coles, in his "Art of Simpling," speaks of the purple marsh-wort (*Comarum palustre*) as "an excellent remedy against the purples." The common tormentil (*Tormentilla officinalis*), from the red colour of its root, was nicknamed the "blood-root," and was said to be efficacious in dysentery; while the bullock's-lungwort derives its name from the resemblance of its leaf to a dewlap, and was on this account held as a remedy for the pneumonia of bullocks.[25] Such is the curious old folk-lore doctrine of signatures, which in olden times was regarded with so much favour, and for a very long time was recognised, without any questioning, as worthy of men's acceptance. It is one of those popular delusions which scientific research has scattered to the winds, having in its place discovered the true medicinal properties of plants, by the aid of chemical analysis.

Footnotes:

1. Pettigrew's "Medical Superstitions," 1844, p. 18. 2. Tylor's "Researches into the Early History of Mankind," 1865, p. 123; Chapiel's "La Doctrine des Signatures," Paris, 1866. 3. "Flowering Plants of Great Britain," iv. 109; see Dr. Prior's "Popular Names of British Plants," 1870-72. 4. Tylor's "Researches into the Early History of Mankind," p. 123. 5. See Porter Smith's "Chinese Materia Medica," p. 103; Lockhart, "Medical Missionary in China," 2nd edition, p. 107; "Reports on Trade at the Treaty Ports of China," 1868, p. 63. 6. Fiske, "Myths and Mythmakers," 1873, p. 43. 7. Dr. Prior's "Popular Names of British Plants," p. 134. 8. See Kelly's "Indo-European Tradition Folk-lore," 1863, pp. 193-198; Ralston's "Russian Folk-Songs," 1872, p. 98. 9. "Mystic Trees and Flowers," Mr. D. Conway, *Fraser's Magazine*, Nov. 1870, p. 608. 10. The "receipt," so called, was the formula of magic words to be employed during the process. See Grindon's "Shakspeare Flora," 1883, p. 242. 11. "Popular Antiquities," 1849, i. 315. 12. "Indo-European Tradition and Folk-lore," p. 197. 13. See Dr. Prior's "Popular Names of British Plants," p. 130; Phillips' "Flora Historica," i. 163. 14. See Sowerby's "English Botany," 1864, i., p. 144. 15. See "Folk-lore of British Plants," *Dublin University Magazine*, September 1873, p. 318. 16. See Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," 1852, iii. 168. 17. "Sketches of Imposture, Deception, and Credulity," 1837, p. 300. 18. See Phillips' "Pomarium Britannicum," 1821, p. 351. 19. "Plant-lore of Shakespeare," 1878, p. 101. 20. See Dr. Prior's "Popular Names of British Plants," p. 154. 21. Hogg's "Vegetable Kingdom," p. 34. 22. See Friend's "Flowers and Flower-lore," ii. 355. 23. "Mystic Trees and Flowers," *Fraser's Magazine*, November 1870, p. 591. 24. "Plant Lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 341. 25. *Ibid.*, pp. 150-160.

CHAPTER XVII.

PLANTS AND THE CALENDAR.

A goodly array of plants have cast their attractions round the festivals of the year, giving an outward beauty to the ceremonies and observances celebrated in their honour. These vary in different countries, although we frequently find the same flower almost universally adopted to commemorate a particular festival. Many plants, again, have had a superstitious connection, having in this respect exercised a powerful influence among the credulous of all ages, numerous survivals of which exist at the present day. Thus, in Westphalia, it is said that if the sun makes its appearance on New Year's Day, the flax will be straight; and there is a belief current in Hessa, that an apple must not be eaten on New Year's Day, as it will produce an abscess.

According to an old adage, the laurestinus, dedicated to St. Faine (January 1), an Irish abess in the sixth century, may be seen in bloom:--

*"Whether the weather be snow or rain,
We are sure to see the flower of St. Faine;
Rain comes but seldom and often snow,
And yet the viburnum is sure to blow."*

And James Montgomery notices this cheerful plant, speaking of it as the,

*"Fair tree of winter, fresh and flowering,
When all around is dead and dry,
Whose ruby buds, though storms are lowering,
Spread their white blossoms to the sky."*

Then there is the dead nettle, which in Italy is assigned to St. Vincent; and the Christmas rose (*Helleboris niger*), dedicated to St. Agnes (21st January), is known in Germany as the flower of St. Agnes, and yet this flower has generally been regarded a plant of evil omen, being coupled by Campbell with the hemlock, as growing "by the witches' tower," where it seems to weave,

*"Round its dark vaults a melancholy bower,
For spirits of the dead at night's enchanted hour."*

At Candlemas it was customary, writes Herrick, to replace the Christmas evergreens with sprigs of box, which were kept up till Easter Eve:--

*"Down with the rosemary and bays,
Down with the mistletoe,
Instead of holly now upraise
The greener box for show."*

The snowdrop has been nicknamed the "Fair Maid of February," from its blossoming about this period, when it was customary for young women dressed in white to walk in procession at the Feast of the Purification, and, according to the old adage:--

*"The snowdrop in purest white array,
First rears her head on Candlemas Day."*

The dainty crocus is said to blow "before the shrine at vernal dawn of St. Valentine." And we may note here how county traditions affirm that in some mysterious way the vegetable world is affected by leap-year influences. A piece of agricultural folk-lore current throughout the country tells us how all the peas and beans grow the wrong way in their pods, the seeds being set in quite the contrary to what they are in other years. The reason assigned for this strange freak of nature is that, "it is the ladies' year, and they (the peas and beans) always lay the wrong way in leap year."

The leek is associated with St. David's Day, the adoption of this plant as the national device of Wales having been explained in various ways. According to Shakespeare it dates from the battle of Cressy, while some have maintained it originated in a victory obtained by Cadwallo over the Saxons, 640, when the Welsh, to distinguish themselves, wore leeks in their hats. It has also been suggested that Welshmen "beautify their hats with verdant leek," from the custom of every farmer, in years gone by, contributing his leek to the common repast when they met at the Cymortha or Association, and mutually helped one another in ploughing their land.

In Ireland the shamrock is worn on St. Patrick's Day. Old women, with plenteous supplies of trefoil, may be heard in every direction crying, "Buy my shamrock, green shamrocks," while little children have "Patrick's crosses" pinned to their sleeves, a custom which is said to have originated in the circumstance that when St. Patrick was preaching the doctrine of the Trinity he made use of the trefoil as a symbol of the great mystery. Several plants have been identified as the shamrock; and in "Contributions towards a Cybele Hibernica," [1] is the following

extensive note:--"Trifolium repens, Dutch clover, shamrock.--This is the plant still worn as shamrock on St. Patrick's Day, though *Medicago lupulina* is also sold in Dublin as the shamrock. Edward Lhwyd, the celebrated antiquary, writing in 1699 to Tancred Robinson, says, after a recent visit to Ireland: 'Their shamrug is our common clover' (Phil. Trans., No. 335). Threkeld, the earliest writer on the wild plants of Ireland, gives Seamar-oge (young trefoil) as the Gaelic name for *Trifolium pratense album*, and expressly says this is the plant worn by the people in their hats on St. Patrick's Day." Some, again, have advocated the claims of the wood-sorrel, and others those of the speedwell, whereas a correspondent of Notes and Queries (4th Ser. iii. 235) says the *Trifolium filiforme* is generally worn in Cork, the *Trifolium minus* also being in demand. It has been urged that the watercress was the plant gathered by the saint, but this plant has been objected to on the ground that its leaf is not trifoliate, and could not have been used by St. Patrick to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity. On the other hand, it has been argued that the story is of modern date, and not to be found in any of the lives of that saint. St. Patrick's cabbage also is a name for "London Pride," from its growing in the West of Ireland, where the Saint lived.

Few flowers have been more popular than the daffodil or lent-lily, or, as it is sometimes called, the lent-rose. There are various corruptions of this name to be found in the West of England, such as lentils, lent-a-lily, lents, and lent-cocks; the last name doubtless referring to the custom of cock-throwing, which was allowed in Lent, boys, in the absence of live cocks, having thrown sticks at the flower. According also to the old rhyme:--

*"Then comes the daffodil beside
Our Lady's smock at our Lady's tide."*

In Catholic countries Lent cakes were flavoured with the herb-tansy, a plant dedicated to St. Athanasius.

In Silesia, on Mid-Lent Sunday, pine boughs, bound with variegated paper and spangles, are carried about by children singing songs, and are hung over the stable doors to keep the animals from evil influences.

Palm Sunday receives its English and the greater part of its foreign names from the old practice of bearing palm-branches, in place of which the early catkins of the willow or yew have been substituted, sprigs of box being used in Brittany.

Stow, in his "Survey of London," tells us that:--"In the weeke before Easter had ye great shows made for the fetching in of a twisted tree or with, as they termed it, out of the wodes into the king's house, and the like into every man's house of honour of worship." This anniversary has also been nicknamed "Fig Sunday," from the old custom of eating figs;

while in Wales it is popularly known as "Flowering Sunday," because persons assemble in the churchyard and spread fresh flowers upon the graves of their friends and relatives.

In Germany, on Palm Sunday, the palm is credited with mystic virtues; and if as many twigs, as there are women of a family, be thrown on a fire--each with a name inscribed on it--the person whose leaf burns soonest will be the first to die.

On Good Friday, in the North of England, an herb pudding was formerly eaten, in which the leaves of the passion-dock (*Polygonum bistorta*) formed the principal ingredient. In Lancashire fig-sue is made, a mixture consisting of sliced figs, nutmeg, ale, and bread.

Wreaths of elder are hung up in Germany after sunset on Good Friday, as charms against lightning; and in Swabia a twig of hazel cut on this day enables the possessor to strike an absent person. In the Tyrol, too, the hazel must be cut on Good Friday to be effectual as a divining-rod. A Bohemian charm against fleas is curious. During Holy Week a leaf of palm must be placed behind a picture of the Virgin, and on Easter morning taken down with this formula: "Depart, all animals without bones." If this rite is observed there will be no more fleas in the house for the remainder of the year.

Of the flowers associated with Eastertide may be mentioned the garden daffodil and the purple pasque flower, another name for the anemone (*Anemone pulsatilla*), in allusion to the Passover and Paschal ceremonies. White broom is also in request, and indeed all white flowers are dedicated to this festival. On Easter Day the Bavarian peasants make garlands of coltsfoot and throw them into the fire; and in the district of Lechrain every household brings to the sacred fire which is lighted at Easter a walnut branch, which, when partially burned, is laid on the hearth-fire during tempests as a charm against lightning. In Slavonian regions the palm is supposed to specially protect the locality where it grows from inclement weather and its hurtful effects; while, in Pomerania, the apple is eaten against fevers.

In Bareuth young girls go at midnight on Easter Day to a fountain silently, and taking care to escape notice, throw into the water little willow rings with their friends' names inscribed thereon, the person whose ring sinks the quickest being the first to die.

In years past the milkwort (*Polygala vulgaris*), from being carried in procession during Rogation Week, was known by such names as the rogation-flower, gang-flower, procession-flower, and cross-flower, a custom noticed by Gerard, who tells us how, "the maidens which use in the countries to walke the procession do make themselves garlands and nose-gaies of the milkwort."

On Ascension Day the Swiss make wreaths of the edelweisse, hanging them over their doors and windows; another plant selected for

this purpose being the amaranth, which, like the former, is considered an emblem of immortality.

In our own country may be mentioned the well-dressing of Tissington, near Dovedale, in Derbyshire, the wells in the village having for years past been most artistically decorated with the choicest flowers.
[2]

Formerly, on St. George's Day (April 23), blue coats were worn by people of fashion. Hence, the harebell being in bloom, was assigned to the saint:--

*"On St. George's Day, when blue is worn,
The blue harebells the fields adorn."*

Flowers have always entered largely into the May Day festival; and many a graphic account has been bequeathed us of the enthusiasm with which both old and young went "a-Maying" soon after midnight, breaking down branches from the trees, which, decorated with nosegays and garlands of flowers, were brought home soon after sunrise and placed at the doors and windows. Shakespeare ("Henry VIII.," v. 4), alluding to the custom, says:--

*"'Tis as much impossible,
Unless we sweep them from the doors with cannons,
To scatter 'em, as 'tis to make 'em sleep
On May Day morning."*

Accordingly, flowers were much in demand, many being named from the month itself, as the hawthorn, known in many places as May-bloom and May-tree, whereas the lily of the valley is nicknamed May-lily. Again, in Cornwall lilac is termed May-flower, and the narrow-leaved elm, which is worn by the peasant in his hat or button-hole, is called May. Similarly, in Germany, we find the term May-bloom applied to such plants as the king-cup and lily of the valley. In North America, says the author of "Flower-lore," the podophyllum is called "May-apple," and the fruit of the *Passiflora incarnata* "May-hops." The chief uses of these May-flowers were for the garlands, the decoration of the Maypole, and the adornment of the home:--

*"To get sweet setywall (red valerian),
The honeysuckle, the harlock,
The lily, and the lady-smock,
To deck their summer hall."*

But one plant was carefully avoided--the cuckoo flower.[3] As in other floral rites, the selection of plants varies on the Continent, branches of the elder being carried about in Savoy, and in Austrian Silesia the Maypole is generally made of fir. According to an Italian proverb, the universal lover is "one who hangs every door with May."

Various plants are associated with Whitsuntide, and according to Chaucer, in his "Romaunt of the Rose":--

*"Have hatte of floures fresh as May,
Chapelett of roses of Whitsunday,
For sich array be costeth but lite."*

In Italy the festival is designated "Pasqua Rosata," from falling at a time when roses are in bloom, while in Germany the peony is the Pentecost rose.

Herrick tells us it was formerly the practice to use birch and spring-flowers for decorative purposes at Whitsuntide:--

*"When yew is out then birch comes in,
And May-flowers beside,
Both of a fresh and fragrant kinne,
To honour Whitsontide."*

At this season, too, box-boughs were gathered to deck the large open fire-places then in fashion, and the guelder rose was dedicated to the festival. Certain flower-sermons have been preached in the city at Whitsuntide, as, for instance, that at St. James's Church, Mitre Court, Aldgate, and another at St. Leonard's Church, Shoreditch, known as the Fairchild Lecture. Turning to the Continent, it is customary in Hanover on Whit-Monday to gather the lily of the valley, and at the close of the day there is scarcely a house without a large bouquet, while in Germany the broom is a favourite plant for decorations. In Russia, at the completion of Whitsuntide, young girls repair to the banks of the Neva and cast in wreaths of flowers in token of their absent friends.

Certain flowers, such as the rose, lavender, woodruff, and box were formerly in request for decking churches on St. Barnabas' Day, the officiating clergy having worn wreaths of roses. Among the allusions to the usage may be mentioned the following entries in the churchwarden's accounts of St. Mary-at-Hill, London, in the reigns of Edward IV. And Henry VII.:--"For rose garlondis and woodrolf garlondis on St. Barnabe Daye, xj'd." "Item, for two doss (dozen?) di bocse (box) garlands for prestes and clerkes on St. Barnabe Day, j's. v'd."

St. Barnabas' thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) derived its name from flowering at the time of the saint's festival, and we are told how:--

*"When St. Barnaby bright smiles night and day,
Poor ragged robin blooms in the hay."*

To Trinity Sunday belong the pansy, or herb-trinity and trefoil, hence the latter has been used for decorations on this anniversary.

In commemoration of the Restoration of Charles II., oak leaves and gilded oak apples have been worn; oak branches having been in past years placed over doors and windows.

Stowe, in his "Survey of London," speaks of the old custom of hanging up St. John's wort over the doors of houses, along with green birch or pine, white lilies, and other plants. The same practice has existed very largely on the Continent, St. John's wort being still regarded as an effective charm against witchcraft. Indeed, few plants have been in greater request on any anniversary, or been invested with such mystic virtues. Fennel, another of the many plants dedicated to St. John, was hung over doors and windows on his night in England, numerous allusions to which occur in the literature of the past. And in connection with this saint we are told how:--

*"The scarlet lychnis, the garden's pride,
Flames at St. John the Baptist's tyde."*

Hemp was also in demand, many forms of divination having been practiced by means of its seed.

According to a belief in Iceland, the trijudent (*Spiraea ulmaria*) will, if put under water on this day, reveal a thief; floating if the thief be a woman, and sinking if a man.

In the Harz, on Midsummer night, branches of the fir-tree are decorated with flowers and coloured eggs, around which the young people dance, singing rhymes. The Bolognese, who regard garlic as the symbol of abundance, buy it at the festival as a charm against poverty during the coming year. The Bohemian, says Mr. Conway, "thinks he can make himself shot-proof for twenty-four hours by finding on St. John's Day pine-cones on the top of a tree, taking them home, and eating a single kernel on each day that he wishes to be invulnerable." In Sicily it is customary, on Midsummer Eve, to fell the highest poplar, and with shouts to drag it through the village, while some beat a drum. Around this poplar, says Mr. Folkard,[4] "symbolising the greatest solar ascension and the decline which follows it, the crowd dance, and sing an appropriate refrain;" and he further mentions that, at the commencement

of the Franco-German War, he saw sprigs of pine stuck on the railway carriages bearing the German soldiers into France.

In East Prussia, the sap of dog-wood, absorbed in a handkerchief, will fulfil every wish; and a Brandenburg remedy for fever is to lie naked under a cherry-tree on St. John's Day, and to shake the dew on one's back. Elsewhere we have alluded to the flowering of the fern on this anniversary, and there is the Bohemian idea that its seed shines like glittering gold.

Corpus Christi Day was, in olden times, observed with much ceremony, the churches being decorated with roses and other choice garlands, while the streets through which the procession passed were strewn with flowers. In North Wales, flowers were scattered before the door; and a particular fern, termed Rhedyn Mair, or Mary's fern--probably the maiden-hair--was specially used for the purpose.

We may mention here that the daisy (*Bellis perennis*) was formerly known as herb-Margaret or Marguerite, and was erroneously supposed to have been named after the virtuous St. Margaret of Antioch:--

"Maid Margarete, that was so meek and mild;"

Whereas it, in all probability, derives its name from St. Margaret of Cortona. According to an old legend it is stated:--

*"There is a double flouret, white and red,
That our lasses call herb-Margaret,
In honour of Cortona's penitent,
Whose contrite soul with red remorse was rent;
While on her penitence kind heaven did throw
The white of purity, surpassing snow;
So white and red in this fair flower entwine,
Which maids are wont to scatter at her shrine."*

Again, of the rainy saint, St. Swithin, we are reminded that:--

*"Against St. Swithin's hastie showers,
The lily white reigns queen of the flowers"--*

A festival around which so much curious lore has clustered.

In former years St. Margaret's Day (July 20) was celebrated with many curious ceremonies, and, according to a well-known couplet in allusion to the emblem of the vanquished dragon, which appears in most pictures of St. Margaret:--

*"Poppies a sanguine mantle spread
For the blood of the dragon that Margaret shed."*

Archdeacon Hare says the Sweet-William, designated the "painted lady," was dedicated to Saint William (June 25), the term "sweet" being a substitution for "saint." This seems doubtful, and some would corrupt the word "sweet" from the French oeillet, corrupted to Willy, and thence to William. Mr. King, however, considers that the small red pink (*Dianthus prolifer*), found wild in the neighbourhood of Rochester, "is perhaps the original Saint Sweet-William," for, he adds, the word "saint" has only been dropped since days which saw the demolition of St. William's shrine in the cathedral. This is but a conjecture, it being uncertain whether the masses of bright flowers which form one of the chief attractions of old-fashioned gardens commemorate St. William of Rochester, St. William of York, or, likeliest perhaps of the three, St. William of Aquitaine, the half soldier, half monk, whose fame was so widely spread throughout the south of Europe.

Roses were said to fade on St. Mary Magdalene's Day (July 20), to whom we find numerous flowers dedicated, such as the maudlin, a nickname of the costmary, either in allusion to her love of scented ointment, or to its use in uterine affections, over which she presided as the patroness of unchaste women, and maudlin-wort, another name for the moon-daisy. But, as Dr. Prior remarks, it should, "be observed that the monks in the Middle Ages mixed up with the story of the Magdalene that of another St. Mary, whose early life was passed in a course of debauchery."

A German piece of folk-lore tells us that it is dangerous to climb a cherry-tree on St. James's Night, as the chance of breaking one's neck will be great, this day being held unlucky. On this day is kept St. Christopher's anniversary, after whom the herb-christopher is named, a species of aconite, according to Gerarde. But, as Dr. Prior adds, the name is applied to many plants which have no qualities in common, some of these being the meadow-sweet, fleabane, osmund-fern, herb-impious, everlasting-flower, and baneberry.

Throughout August, during the ingathering of the harvest, a host of customs have been kept up from time immemorial, which have been duly noticed by Brand, while towards the close of the month we are reminded of St. Bartholomew's Day by the gaudy sunflower, which has been nicknamed St. Bartholomew's star, the term "star" having been often used "as an emblematical representation of brilliant virtues or any sign of admiration." It is, too, suggested by Archdeacon Hare that the filbert may owe its name to St. Philbert, whose festival was on the 22nd August.

The passion-flower has been termed Holy Rood flower, and it is the ecclesiastical emblem of Holy Cross Day, for, according to the familiar couplet:--

*"The passion-flower long has blow'd
To betoken us signs of the Holy Rood."*

Then there is the Michaelmas Day, which:--

*"Among dead weeds,
Bloom for St. Michael's valorous deeds,"*

and the golden star lily, termed St. Jerome's lily. On St. Luke's Day, certain flowers, as we have already noticed, have been in request for love divinations; and on the Continent the chestnut is eaten on the festival of St. Simon, in Piedmont on All Souls' Day, and in France on St. Martin's, when old women assemble beneath the windows and sing a long ballad. Hallowe'en has its use among divinations, at which time various plants are in request, and among the observance of All Souls' Day was blessing the beans. It would appear, too, that in days gone by, on the eve of All Saints' Day, heath was specially burnt by way of a bonfire:--

*"On All Saints' Day bare is the place where the heath is burnt;
The plough is in the furrow, the ox at work."*

From the shape of its flower, the trumpet-flowered wood-sorrel has been called St. Cecilia's flower, whose festival is kept on November 22. The *Nigella damascena*, popularly known as love-in-a-mist, was designated St. Catherine's flower, "from its persistent styles," writes Dr. Prior,[5] "resembling the spokes of her wheel." There was also the Catherine-pear, to which Gay alludes in his "Pastorals," where Sparabella, on comparing herself with her rival, says:--

*"Her wan complexion's like the withered leek,
While Catherine-pears adorn my ruddy cheek."*

Herb-Barbara, or St. Barbara's cress (*Barbarea vulgaris*), was so called from growing and being eaten about the time of her festival (December 4).

Coming to Christmas, some of the principal evergreens used in this country for decorative purposes are the ivy, laurel, bay, arbor vitae, rosemary, and holly; mistletoe, on account of its connection with Druidic rites, having been excluded from churches. Speaking of the holly, Mr.

Conway remarks that, "it was to the ancient races of the north a sign of the life which preserved nature through the desolation of winter, and was gathered into pagan temples to comfort the sylvan spirits during the general death." He further adds that "it is a singular fact that it is used by the wildest Indians of the Pacific coast in their ceremonies of purification. The ashen-faggot was in request for the Christmas fire, the ceremonies relating to which are well known."

Footnotes:

1. By D. Moore and A.G. Moore, 1866. 2. See "Journal of the Arch. Assoc.," 1832, vii. 206. 3. See "British Popular Customs." 4. "Plant Lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 504. 5. "Popular Names of British Plants," 1879, p. 204.



CHAPTER XVIII.

CHILDREN'S RHYMES AND GAMES.

Children are more or less observers of nature, and frequently far more so than their elders. This, perhaps, is in a great measure to be accounted for from the fact that childhood is naturally inquisitive, and fond of having explained whatever seems in any way mysterious. Such especially is the case in the works of nature, and in a country ramble with children their little voices are generally busy inquiring why this bird does this, or that plant grows in such a way--a variety of questions, indeed, which unmistakably prove that the young mind instinctively seeks after knowledge. Hence, we find that the works of nature enter largely into children's pastimes; a few specimens of their rhymes and games associated with plants we quote below.

In Lincolnshire, the butter-bur (*Petasites vulgaris*) is nicknamed bog-horns, because the children use the hollow stalks as horns or trumpets, and the young leaves and shoots of the common hawthorn (*Cratoegus oxyacantha*), from being commonly eaten by children in spring, are known as "bread and cheese;" while the ladies-smock (*Cardamine pratensis*) is termed "bread and milk," from the custom, it has been suggested, of country people having bread and milk for breakfast about the season when the flower first comes in. In the North of England this plant is known as cuckoo-spit, because almost every flower stem has deposited upon it a frothy patch not unlike human saliva, in which is enveloped a pale green insect. Few north-country children will gather these flowers, believing that it is unlucky to do so, adding that the cuckoo has spit upon it when flying over. [1]

The fruits of the mallow are popularly termed by children cheeses, in allusion to which Clare writes:--

*"The sitting down when school was o'er,
Upon the threshold of the door,
Picking from mallows, sport to please,
The crumpled seed we call a cheese."*

A Buckinghamshire name with children for the deadly nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*) is the naughty-man's cherry, an illustration of which we may quote from Curtis's "Flora Londinensis":--"On Keep Hill, near High Wycombe, where we observed it, there chanced to be a little boy. I asked him if he knew the plant. He answered 'Yes; it was naughty-man's

cherries." In the North of England the broad-dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), when in seed, is known by children as curly-cows, who milk it by drawing the stalks through their fingers. Again, in the same locality, children speaking of the dead-man's thumb, one of the popular names of the *Orchis mascula*, tell one another with mysterious awe that the root was once the thumb of some unburied murderer. In one of the "Roxburghe Ballads" the phrase is referred to:--

*"Then round the meadows did she walke,
Catching each flower by the stalke,
Suche as within the meadows grew,
As dead-man's thumbs and harebell blue."*

It is to this plant that Shakespeare doubtless alludes in "Hamlet" (Act iv. sc. 7), where:--

*"Long purples
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead-men's fingers call them."*

In the south of Scotland, the name "doudle," says Jamieson, is applied to the root of the common reed-grass (*Phragmites communis*), which is found, partially decayed, in morasses, and of "which the children in the south of Scotland make a sort of musical instrument, similar to the oaten pipes of the ancients." In Yorkshire, the water-scorpularia (*Scrophularia aquatica*), is in children's language known as "fiddle-wood," so called because the stems are by children stripped of their leaves, and scraped across each other fiddler-fashion, when they produce a squeaking sound. This juvenile music is the source of infinite amusement among children, and is carried on by them with much enthusiasm in their games. Likewise, the spear-thistle (*Carduus lanceolatus*) is designated Marian in Scotland, while children blow the pappus from the receptacle, saying:--

*"Marian, Marian, what's the time of day,
One o'clock, two o'clock--it's time we were away."*

In Cheshire, when children first see the heads of the ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) in spring, they repeat the following rhyme:--

*"Chimney sweeper all in black,
Go to the brook and wash your back,
Wash it clean, or wash it none;
Chimney sweeper, have you done?" :--*

Being in all probability a mode of divination for insuring good luck. Another name for the same plant is "cocks," from children fighting the flower-stems one against another.

The common hazel-nut (*Corylus avellana*) is frequently nicknamed the "cob-nut," and was so called from being used in an old game played by children. An old name for the devil's-bit (*Scabiosa succisa*), in the northern counties, and in Scotland, is "curl-doddy," from the resemblance of the head of flowers to the curly pate of a boy, this nickname being often used by children who thus address the plant:--

*"Curly-doddy, do my biddin',
Sooop my house, and shoal my widden'."*

In Ireland, children twist the stalk, and as it slowly untwists in the hand, thus address it:--

*"Curl-doddy on the midden,
Turn round an' take my biddin'."*

In Cumberland, the *Primula farinosa*, commonly known as bird's-eye, is called by children "bird-een."

*"The lockety-gowan and bonny bird-een
Are the fairest flowers that ever were seen."*

And in many places the *Leontodon taraxacum* is designated "blow-ball," because children blow the ripe fruit from the receptacle to tell the time of day and for various purposes of divination. Thus in the "Sad Shepherd," page 8, it is said:--

*"Her treading would not bend a blade of grass,
Or shake the downy blow-ball from his stalk."*

In Scotland, one of the popular names of the *Angelica sylvestris* is "aik-skeiters," or "hear-skeiters," because children shoot oats through the hollow stems, as peas are shot through a pea-shooter. Then there is the goose-grass (*Galium aparine*), variously called goose-bill, beggar's-lice, scratch-weed, and which has been designated blind-tongue, because "children with the leaves practise phlebotomy upon the tongue of those playmates who are simple enough to endure it," a custom once very general in Scotland. [2]

The catkins of the willow are in some counties known as "goslings," or "goslins,"--children, says Halliwell, [3] sometimes playing with them

by putting them in the fire and singeing them brown, repeating verses at the same time. One of the names of the heath-pea (*Lathyrus macrorrhizus*) is liquory-knots, and school-boys in Berwickshire so call them, for when dried their taste is not unlike that of the real liquorice. [4] Again, a children's name of common henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*) is "loaves of bread," an allusion to which is made by Clare in his "Shepherd's Calendar":--

*"Hunting from the stack-yard sod
The stinking henbane's belted pod,
By youth's warm fancies sweetly led
To christen them his loaves of bread."*

A Worcestershire name for a horse-chestnut is the "oblionker tree." According to a correspondent of Notes and Queries (5th Ser. x. 177), in the autumn, when the chestnuts are falling from their trunks, boys thread them on string and play a "cob-nut" game with them. When the striker is taking aim, and preparing for a shot at his adversary's nut, he says:--

*"Oblionker!
My first conker (conquer)."*

The word oblionker apparently being a meaningless invention to rhyme with the word conquer, which has by degrees become applied to the fruit itself.

The wall peniterry (*Parietaria officinalis*) is known in Ireland as "peniterry," and is thus described in "Father Connell, by the O'Hara Family" (chap. xii.):--

"A weed called, locally at least, peniterry, to which the suddenly terrified [schoolboy] idler might run in his need, grasping it hard and threateningly, and repeating the following 'words of power':--

*'Peniterry, peniterry, that grows by the wall,
Save me from a whipping, or I'll pull you roots and all.'*"

Johnston, who has noticed so many odd superstitions, tells us that the tuberous ground-nut (*Bunium flexuosum*), which has various nicknames, such as "lousy," "loozie," or "lucie arnut," is dug up by children who eat the roots, "but they are hindered from indulging to excess by a cherished belief that the luxury tends to generate vermin in the head." [5]

An old rhyme often in years past used by country children when the daffodils made their annual appearance in early spring, was as follows:--

*"Daff-a-down-dill
Has now come to town,
In a yellow petticoat
And a green gown."*

A name for the shepherd's purse is "mother's-heart," and in the eastern Border district, says Johnston, children have a sort of game with the seed-pouch. They hold it out to their companions, inviting them to "take a haud o' that." It immediately cracks, and then follows a triumphant shout, "You've broken your mother's heart." In Northamptonshire, children pick the leaves of the herb called pick-folly, one by one, repeating each time the words, "Rich man, poor man, beggar-man, thief," &c., fancying that the one which comes to be named at the last plucking will prove the conditions of their future partners. Variations of this custom exist elsewhere, and a correspondent of "Science Gossip" (1876, xi. 94). writes:--"I remember when at school at Birmingham that my playmates manifested a very great repugnance to this plant. Very few of them would touch it, and it was known to us by the two bad names, "haughty-man's plaything," and "pick your mother's heart out." In Hanover, as well as in the Swiss canton of St. Gall, the same plant is offered to uninitiated persons with a request to pluck one of the pods. Should he do so the others exclaim, "You have stolen a purse of gold from your father and mother."" "It is interesting to find," writes Mr. Britten in the "Folk-lore Record" (i. 159), "that a common tropical weed, *Ageratum conyzoides*, is employed by children in Venezuela in a very similar manner."

The compilers of the "Dictionary of Plant Names" consider that the double (garden) form of *Saxifraga granulata*, designated "pretty maids," may be referred to in the old nursery rhyme:--

*"Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
Cockle-shells, and silver bells,
And pretty maids all in a row."*

The old-man's-beard (*Clematis vitalba*) is in many places popularly known as smoke-wood, because "our village-boys smoke pieces of the wood as they do of rattan cane; hence, it is sometimes called smoke-wood, and smoking-cane." [6]

The children of Galloway play at hide-and-seek with a little black-topped flower which is known by them as the Davie-drap, meantime repeating the following rhyme:--

*"Within the bounds of this I hap
My black and bonnie Davie-drap:
Wha is he, the cunning ane,
To me my Davie-drap will fin'?"*

This plant, it has been suggested, [7] being the cuckoo grass (*Luzula campestris*), which so often figures in children's games and rhymes.

Once more, there are numerous games played by children in which certain flowers are introduced, as in the following, known as "the three flowers," played in Scotland, and thus described in Chambers's "Popular Rhymes," p. 127:--"A group of lads and lasses being assembled round the fire, two leave the party and consult together as to the names of three others, young men or girls, whom they designate as the red rose, the pink, and the gillyflower. The two young men then return, and having selected a member of the fairer group, they say to her:--

*'My mistress sent me unto thine,
Wi' three young flowers baith fair and fine:--
The pink, the rose, and the gillyflower,
And as they here do stand,
Whilk will ye sink, whilk will ye swim,
And whilk bring hame to land?'*

The maiden must choose one of the flowers named, on which she passes some approving epithet, adding, at the same time, a disapproving rejection of the other two, as in the following terms: 'I will sink the pink, swim the rose, and bring hame the gillyflower to land.' The young men then disclose the names of the parties upon whom they had fixed those appellations respectively, when it may chance she has slighted the person to whom she is most attached, and contrariwise." Games of this kind are very varied, and still afford many an evening's amusement among the young people of our country villages during the winter evenings.

Footnotes:

1. Journal of Horticulture, 1876, p. 355.
2. Johnston's "Botany of Eastern Borders."
3. "Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words."
4. Johnston's "Botany of Eastern Borders," p. 57.
5. "Botany of Eastern Borders," p. 85.
6. "English Botany," ed. I, iii.
- p. 3.
7. "Dictionary of Plant Names" (Britten and Holland), p. 145.

CHAPTER XIX.

SACRED PLANTS.

Closely allied with plant-worship is the sacred and superstitious reverence which, from time immemorial, has been paid by various communities to certain trees and plants.

In many cases this sanctity originated in the olden heathen mythology, when "every flower was the emblem of a god; every tree the abode of a nymph." From their association, too, with certain events, plants frequently acquired a sacred character, and occasionally their specific virtues enhanced their veneration. In short, the large number of sacred plants found in different countries must be attributed to a variety of causes, illustrations of which are given in the present chapter.

Thus going back to mythological times, it may be noticed that trees into which persons were metamorphosed became sacred. The laurel was sacred to Apollo in memory of Daphne, into which tree she was changed when escaping from his advances:--

*"Because thou canst not be
My mistress, I espouse thee for my tree;
Be thou the prize of honour and renown,
The deathless poet and the poet's crown;
Thou shalt the Roman festivals adorn,
And, after poets, be by victors won."*

But it is unnecessary to give further instances of such familiar stories, of which early history is full. At the same time it is noteworthy that many of these plants which acquired a sanctity from heathen mythology still retain their sacred character--a fact which has invested them with various superstitions, in addition to having caused them to be selected for ceremonial usage and homage in modern times. Thus the pine, with its mythical origin and heathen associations, is an important tree on the Continent, being surrounded with a host of legends, most of which, in one shape or another, are relics of early forms of belief. The sacred character of the oak still survives in modern folk-lore, and a host of flowers which grace our fields and hedges have sacred associations from their connection with the heathen gods of old. Thus the anemone, poppy, and violet were dedicated to Venus; and to Diana "all flowers growing in untrodden dells and shady nooks, uncontaminated by the tread of man, more especially belonged." The narcissus and maidenhair were sacred to Proserpina, and the willow to Ceres. The pink is Jove's flower, and of the

flowers assigned to Juno may be mentioned the lily, crocus, and asphodel.

Passing on to other countries, we find among the plants most conspicuous for their sacred character the well-known lotus of the East (*Nelunibium speciosum*), around which so many traditions and mythological legends have clustered. According to a Hindu legend, from its blossom Brahma came forth:--

*"A form Cerulean fluttered o'er the deep;
Brightest of beings, greatest of the great,
Who, not as mortals steep
Their eyes in dewy sleep,
But heavenly pensive on the lotus lay,
That blossom'd at his touch, and shed a golden ray.
Hail, primal blossom! hail, empyreal gem,
Kemel, or Pedma, [1] or whate'er high name
Delight thee, say. What four-formed godhead came,
With graceful stole and beamy diadem,
Forth from thy verdant stem." [2]*

Buddha, too, whose symbol is the lotus, is said to have first appeared floating on this mystic flower, and, indeed, it would seem that many of the Eastern deities were fond of resting on its leaves; while in China, the god Pazza is generally represented as occupying this position. Hence the lotus has long been an object of worship, and as a sacred plant holds a most distinguished place, for it is the flower of the,

*"Old Hindu mythologies, wherein
The lotus, attribute of Ganga--embling
The world's great reproductive power--was held
In veneration."*

We may mention here that the lotus, known also as the sacred bean of Egypt, and the rose-lily of the Nile, as far back as four thousand years ago was held in high sanctity by the Egyptian priests, still retaining its sacred character in China, Japan, and Asiatic Russia.

Another famous sacred plant is the soma or moon-plant of India, the *Asclepias acida*, a climbing plant with milky juice, which Windischmann has identified with the "tree of life which grew in paradise." Its milk juice was said to confer immortality, the plant itself never decaying; and in a hymn in the Rig Veda the soma sacrifice is thus described:--

*"We've quaffed the soma bright
And are immortal grown,
We've entered into light*

*And all the gods have known.
What mortal can now harm,
Or foeman vex us more?
Through thee beyond alarm,
Immortal God! we soar."*

Then there is the peepul or bo-tree (*Ficus religiosa*), which is held in high veneration by the followers of Buddha, in the vicinity of whose temples it is generally planted. One of these trees in Ceylon is said to be of very great antiquity, and according to Sir J. E. Tennant, "to it kings have even dedicated their dominions in testimony of their belief that it is a branch of the identical fig-tree under which Gotama Buddha reclined when he underwent his apotheosis."

The peepul-tree is highly venerated in Java, and by the Buddhists of Thibet is known as the bridge of safety, over which mortals pass from the shores of this world to those of the unseen one beyond. Occasionally confounded with this peepul is the banyan (*Ficus indica*), which is another sacred tree of the Indians. Under its shade Vishnu is said to have been born; and by the Chinese, Buddha is represented as sitting beneath its leaves to receive the homage of the god Brahma. Another sacred tree is the deodar (*Cedrus deodara*), a species of cedar, being the Devadara, or tree-god of the Shastras, which in so many of the ancient Hindu hymns is depicted as the symbol of power and majesty. [3] The aroka, or *Saraca indica*, is said to preserve chastity, and is dedicated to Kama, the Indian god of love, while with the negroes of Senegambia the baobab-tree is an object of worship. In Borneo the nipa-palm is held in veneration, and the Mexican Indians have their moriche-palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*). The *Tamarindus Indica* is in Ceylon dedicated to Siva, the god of destruction; and in Thibet, the jambu or rose-apple is believed to be the representative of the divine amarita-tree which bears ambrosia.

The pomegranate, with its mystic origin and early sacred associations, was long revered by the Persians and Jews, an old tradition having identified it as the forbidden fruit given by Eve to Adam. Again, as a sacred plant the basil has from time immemorial been held in high repute by the Hindus, having been sacred to Vishnu. Indeed it is worshipped as a deity itself, and is invoked as the goddess Tulasî for the protection of the human frame. It is further said that "the heart of Vishnu, the husband of the Tulasî, is agitated and tormented whenever the least sprig is broken of a plant of Tulasî, his wife."

Among further flowers holding a sacred character may be mentioned the henna, the Egyptian privet (*Lawsonia alba*), the flower of paradise, which was pronounced by Mahomet as "chief of the flowers of this world and the next," the wormwood having been dedicated to the goddess Iris. By the aborigines of the Canary Islands, the dragon-tree

(*Dracoena draco*) of Orotava was an object of sacred reverence; [4] and in Burmah at the present day the eugenia is held sacred. [5]

It has been remarked that the life of Christ may be said to fling its shadow over the whole vegetable world. [6] "From this time the trees and the flowers which had been associated with heathen rites and deities, began to be connected with holier names, and not unfrequently with the events of the crucifixion itself."

Thus, upon the Virgin Mary a wealth of flowers was lavished, all white ones, having been "considered typical of her purity and holiness, and consecrated to her festivals." [7] Indeed, not only, "were the finer flowers wrested from the classic Juno and Diana, and from the Freyja and Bertha of northern lands given to her, but lovely buds of every hue were laid upon her shrines." [8] One species, for instance, of the maiden-hair fern, known also as "Our Lady's hair," is designated in Iceland "Freyja's hair," and the rose, often styled "Frau rose," or "Mother rose," the favourite flower of Hulda, was transferred to the Virgin. On the other hand, many plants bearing the name of Our Lady, were, writes Mr. Folkard, in Puritan times, "replaced by the name of Venus, thus recurring to the ancient nomenclature; 'Our Lady's comb' becoming 'Venus's comb.'" But the two flowers which were specially connected with the Virgin were the lily and the rose. Accordingly, in Italian art, a vase of lilies stands by the Virgin's side, with three flowers crowning three green stems. The flower is generally the large white lily of our gardens, "the pure white petals signifying her spotless body, and the golden anthers within typifying her soul sparkling with divine light." [9]

The rose, both red and white, appears at an early period as an emblem of the Virgin, "and was specially so recognised by St. Dominic when he instituted the devotion of the rosary, with direct reference to her." [10] Among other flowers connected with the Virgin Mary may be mentioned the flowering-rod, according to which Joseph was chosen for her husband, because his rod budded into flower, and a dove settled upon the top of it. In Tuscany a similar legend is attached to the oleander, and elsewhere the white campanula has been known as the "little staff of St. Joseph," while a German name for the white double daffodill is "Joseph's staff."

Then there is "Our Lady's bed-straw," which filled the manger on which the infant Jesus was laid; while of the plant said to have formed the Virgin's bed may be mentioned the thyme, woodroof, and groundsel. The white-spotted green leaves of "Our Lady's thistle" were caused by some drops of her milk falling upon them, and in Cheshire we find the same idea connected with the pulmonaria or "lady's milk sile," the word "sile" being a provincialism for "soil," or "stain." A German tradition

makes the common fern (*Polypodium vulgare*) to have sprung from the Virgin's milk.

Numerous flowers have been identified with her dress, such as the marigold, termed by Shakespeare "Mary-bud," which she wore in her bosom. The cuckoo-flower of our meadows is "Our Lady's smock," which Shakespeare refers to in those charming lines in "Love's Labour's Lost," where:--

*"When daisies pied and violets blue,
And lady's smocks all silver white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight,
The cuckoo then on every tree
Mocks married men, for thus sings he,
Cuckoo."*

And one of the finest of our orchids is "Our Lady's slipper." The ribbon grass is "Our Lady's garters," and the dodder supplies her "laces." In the same way many flowers have been associated with the Virgin herself. Thus, there is "Our Lady's tresses," and a popular name for the maiden-hair fern and quaking-grass is "Virgin's hair." The lilies of the valley are her tears, and a German nickname for the lungwort is "Our Lady's milk-wort." The *Anthyllis vulneraria* is "Our Lady's fingers," and the kidney-wort has been designated "lady's navel." Certain orchids, from the peculiar form of their hand-shaped roots, have been popularly termed "Our Lady's hands," a name given in France to the dead-nettle.

Of the many other plants dedicated to the Virgin may be mentioned the snowdrop, popularly known as the "fair maid of February," opening its floweret at the time of Candlemas. According to an old monkish tradition it blooms at this time, in memory of the Virgin having taken the child Jesus to the temple, and there presented her offering. A further reason for the snowdrop's association with the Virgin originated in the custom of removing her image from the altar on the day of the Purification, and strewing over the vacant place with these emblems of purity. The bleeding nun (*Cyclamen europoeum*) was consecrated to the Virgin, and in France the spearmint is termed "Our Lady's mint." In Germany the costmary (*Costaminta vulgaris*) is "Our Lady's balsam," the white-flowered wormwood the "smock of our Lady," and in olden days the iris or fleur-de-lis was held peculiarly sacred.

The little pink is "lady's cushion," and the campanula is her looking-glass. Then there is "Our Lady's comb," with its long, fragile seed-vessels resembling the teeth of a comb, while the cowslip is "Our Lady's bunch of keys." In France, the digitalis supplies her with gloves, and in days gone by the *Convallaria polygonatum* was the "Lady's seal." According

to some old writers, the black briony went by this name, and Hare gives this explanation:--"Our Lady's seal' (*Sigillum marioe*) is among the names of the black briony, owing to the great efficacy of its roots when spread in a plaster and applied as it were to heal up a scar or bruise." Formerly a species of primula was known as "lady's candlestick," and a Wiltshire nickname for the common convolvulus is "lady's nightcap," Canterbury bells in some places supplying this need. The harebell is "lady's thimble," and the plant which affords her a mantle is the *Alchemilla vulgaris*, with its grey-green leaf covered with a soft silky hair. This is the Maria Stakker of Iceland, which when placed under the pillow produces sleep.

Once more, the strawberry is one of the fruits that has been dedicated to her; and a species of nut, popularly known as the molluka bean, is in many parts called the "Virgin Mary's nut." The cherry-tree, too, has long been consecrated to the Virgin from the following tradition:-- Being desirous one day of refreshing herself with some cherries which she saw hanging upon a tree, she requested Joseph to gather some for her. But he hesitated, and mockingly said, "Let the father of thy child present them to you." But these words had been no sooner uttered than the branch of the cherry-tree inclined itself of its own accord to the Virgin's hand. There are many other plants associated in one way or another with the Virgin, but the instances already given are representative of this wide subject. In connection, too, with her various festivals, we find numerous plants; and as the author of "Flower-lore" remarks, "to the Madonna were assigned the white iris, blossoming almond-tree, narcissus, and white lily, all appropriate to the Annunciation." The flowers appropriate to the "Visitation of Our Lady" were, in addition to the lily, roses red and white, while to the "Feast of Assumption" is assigned the "Virgin's bower," "worthy to be so called," writes Gerarde, "by reason of the goodly shadow which the branches make with their thick bushing and climbing, as also for the beauty of the flowers, and the pleasant scent and savour of the same."

Many plants have been associated with St. John the Baptist, from his having been the forerunner of Christ. Thus, the common plant which bears his name, St. John's wort, is marked with blood-like spots, known as the "blood of St. John," making their appearance on the day he was beheaded. The scarlet lychnis, popularly nicknamed the "great candlestick," was commonly said to be lighted up for his day. The carob tree has been designated "St. John's bread," from a tradition that it supplied him with food in the wilderness; and currants, from beginning to ripen at this time, have been nicknamed "berries of St. John." The artemisia was in Germany "St. John's girdle," and in Sicily was applied to his beard.

In connection with Christ's birth it may be noted that the early painters represent the Angel Gabriel with either a sceptre or spray of the olive tree, while in the later period of Italian art he has in his hand a branch of white lilies.[11] The star which pointed out the place

of His birth has long been immortalised by the *Ornithogalum umbellatum*, or Star of Bethlehem, which has been thought to resemble the pictures descriptive of it; in France there is a pretty legend of the rose-coloured sainfoin. When the infant Jesus was lying in the manger the plant was found among the grass and herbs which composed his bed. But suddenly it opened its pretty blossom, that it might form a wreath around His head. On this account it has been held in high repute. Hence the practice in Italy of decking mangers at Christmas time with moss, sow-thistle, cypress, and holly. [12]

Near the city of On there was shown for many centuries the sacred fig-tree, under which the Holy Family rested during their "Flight into Egypt," and a Bavarian tradition makes the tree under which they found shelter a hazel. A German legend, on the other hand, informs us that as they took their flight they came into a thickly-wooded forest, when, on their approach, all the trees, with the exception of the aspen, paid reverential homage. The disrespectful arrogance of the aspen, however, did not escape the notice of the Holy Child, who thereupon pronounced a curse against it, whereupon its leaves began to tremble, and have done so ever since:--

*"Once as our Saviour walked with men below,
His path of mercy through a forest lay;
And mark how all the drooping branches show
What homage best a silent tree may pay.*

*Only the aspen stood erect and free,
Scorning to join the voiceless worship pure,
But see! He cast one look upon the tree,
Struck to the heart she trembles evermore."*

The "rose of Jericho" has long been regarded with special reverence, having first blossomed at Christ's birth, closed at His crucifixion, and opened again at the resurrection. At the flight into Egypt it is reported to have sprung up to mark the footsteps of the sacred family, and was consequently designated Mary's rose. The pine protected them from Herod's soldiers, while the juniper opened its branches and offered a welcome shelter, although it afterwards, says an old legend, furnished the wood for the cross.

But some trees were not so thoughtful, for "the brooms and the chick-peas rustled and crackled, and the flax bristled up." According to another old legend we are informed that by the fountain where the Virgin Mary washed the swaddling-clothes of her sacred infant, beautiful bushes sprang up in memory of the event. Among the many further legends connected with the Virgin may be mentioned the following connected with her death:--The story runs that she was extremely anxious to see her Son again, and that whilst weeping, an angel appeared, and said, "Hail, O Mary! I bring thee here a branch of palm, gathered in paradise; command that it be carried before thy bier in the day of thy death, for in three days thy soul shall leave thy body, and thou shalt enter into paradise, where thy Son awaits thy coming." The angel then departed, but the palm-branch shed a light from every leaf, and the apostles, although scattered in different parts of the world, were miraculously caught up and set down at the Virgin's door. The sacred palm-branch she then assigned to the care of St. John, who carried it before her bier at the time of her burial. [13]

The trees and flowers associated with the crucifixion are widely represented, and have given rise to many a pretty legend. Several plants are said to owe their dark-stained blossoms to the blood-drops which trickled from the cross; amongst these being the wood-sorrel, the spotted persicaria, the arum, the purple orchis, which is known in Cheshire as "Gethsemane," and the red anemone, which has been termed the "blood-drops of Christ." A Flemish legend, too, accounts in the same way for the crimson-spotted leaves of the rood-selken. The plant which has gained the unenviable notoriety of supplying the crown of thorns has been variously stated as the boxthorn, the bramble, the buckthorns, [14] and barberry, while Mr. Conway quotes an old tradition, which tells how the drops of blood that fell from the crown of thorns, composed of the rose-briar, fell to the ground and blossomed to roses. [15] Some again maintain that the wild hyssop was employed, and one plant which was specially signalled out in olden times is the auberpine or white-thorn. In Germany holly is Christ-thorn, and according to an Eastern tradition it was the prickly rush, but as Mr. King [16] remarks, "the belief of the East has been tolerably constant to what was possibly the real plant employed, the nabk (*Zizyphus spina-Christi*), a species of buckthorn." The negroes of the West Indies say that, "a branch of the cashew tree was used, and that in consequence one of the bright golden petals of the flower became black and blood-stained."

Then again, according to a Swedish legend, the dwarf birch tree afforded the rod with which Christ was scourged, which accounts for its stunted appearance; while another legend tells us it was the willow with its drooping branches. Rubens, together with the earlier Italian painters, depict the reed-mace [17] or bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) as the rod given to

Him to carry; a plant still put by Catholics into the hands of statues of Christ. But in Poland, where the plant is difficult to procure, "the flower-stalk of the leek is substituted."

The mournful tree which formed the wood of the cross has always been a disputed question, and given rise to a host of curious legends. According to Sir John Maundeville, it was composed of cedar, cypress, palm, and olive, while some have instituted in the place of the two latter the pine and the box; the notion being that those four woods represented the four quarters of the globe. Foremost amongst the other trees to which this distinction has been assigned, are the aspen, poplar, oak, elder, and mistletoe. Hence is explained the gloomy shivering of the aspen leaf, the trembling of the poplar, and the popular antipathy to utilising elder twigs for fagots. But it is probable that the respect paid to the elder "has its roots in the old heathenism of the north," and to this day, in Denmark, it is said to be protected by "a being called the elder-mother," so that it is not safe to damage it in any way. [18] The mistletoe, which exists now as a mere parasite, was before the crucifixion a fine forest tree; its present condition being a lasting monument of the disgrace it incurred through its ignominious use. [19] A further legend informs us that when the Jews were in search of wood for the cross, every tree, with the exception of the oak, split itself to avoid being desecrated. On this account, Grecian woodcutters avoid the oak, regarding it as an accursed tree.

The bright blue blossoms of the speedwell, which enliven our wayside hedges in spring-time, are said to display in their markings a representation of the kerchief of St Veronica, imprinted with the features of Christ. [20] According to an old tradition, when our Lord was on His way to Calvary, bearing His Cross, He happened to pass by the door of Veronica, who, beholding the drops of agony on His brow, wiped His face with a kerchief or napkin. The sacred features, however, remained impressed upon the linen, and from the fancied resemblance of the blossom of the speedwell to this hallowed relic, the plant was named Veronica.

A plant closely connected by tradition with the crucifixion is the passion-flower. As soon as the early Spanish settlers in South America first glanced on it, they fancied they had discovered not only a marvellous symbol of Christ's passion, but received an assurance of the ultimate triumph of Christianity. Jacomo Bosio, who obtained his knowledge of it from certain Mexican Jesuits, speaks of it as "the flower of the five wounds," and has given a very minute description of it, showing how exactly every part is a picture of the mysteries of the Passion. "It would seem," he adds, "as if the Creator of the world had chosen it to represent the principal emblems of His Son's Passion; so that in due season it might assist, when its marvels should be explained to them, in the condition of the heathen people, in whose country it grew."

In Brittany, vervain is popularly termed the "herb of the cross," and when gathered with a certain formula is efficacious in curing wounds. [21]

In legendary lore, much uncertainty exists as to the tree on which Judas hanged himself. According to Sir John Maundeville, there it stood in the vicinity of Mount Sion, "the tree of eldre, that Judas henge himself upon, for despeyr," a legend which has been popularly received. Shakespeare, in his "Love's Labour's Lost," says "Judas was hanged on an elder," and the story is further alluded to in Piers Plowman's vision:--

*"Judas, he japed
With Jewen silver,
And sithen on an eller,
Hanged himselve."*

Gerarde makes it the wild carob, a tree which, as already stated, was formerly known as "St. John's bread," from a popular belief that the Baptist fed upon it while in the wilderness. A Sicilian tradition identifies the tree as a tamarisk, and a Russian proverb, in allusion to the aspen, tells us "there is an accursed tree which trembles without even a breath of wind." The fig, also, has been mentioned as the ill-fated tree, and some traditions have gone so far as to say that it was the very same one as was cursed by our Lord.

As might be expected, numerous plants have become interwoven with the lives of the saints, a subject on which many works have been written. Hence it is unnecessary to do more than briefly note some of the more important items of sacred lore which have been embodied in many of the early Christian legends. The yellow rattle has been assigned to St. Peter, and the *Primula veris*, from its resemblance to a bunch of keys, is St. Peter's wort. Many flowers, too, from the time of their blossoming, have been dedicated to certain saints, as the square St. John's wort (*Hypericum quadrangulare*), which is also known as St. Peter's wort; while in Germany wall-barley is termed Peter's corn. Of the many legends connected with the cherry we are reminded that on one occasion Christ gave one to St. Peter, at the same time reminding him not to despise little things.

St. James is associated with several plants--the St. James' wort (*Senecio Jacoboea*), either from its having been much used for the diseases of horses, of which the saint was the patron, or owing to its blossoming on his festival. The same name was applied to the shepherd's purse and the rag-weed. Incidentally, too, in our chapter on the calendar we have alluded to many flowers associated with the saints, and spoken of the customs observed in their honour.

Similarly the later saints had particular flowers dedicated to their memory; and, indeed, a complete catalogue of flowers has been compiled--one for each day in the year--the flower in many cases having been selected because it flowered on the festival of that saint. Thus the common bean was dedicated to St. Ignatius, and the blue hyacinth to St. Dorothy, while to St. Hilary the barren strawberry has been assigned. St. Anne is associated with the camomile, and St. Margaret with the Virginian dragon's head. Then there is St. Anthony's turnips and St. Barbara's cress--the "Saints' Floral Directory," in "Hone's Every-Day Book," giving a fuller and more extensive list. But the illustrations we have already given are sufficient to show how fully the names of the saints have been perpetuated by so many of our well-known plants not only being dedicated to, but named after them, a fact which is perhaps more abundantly the case on the Continent. Then, as it has been remarked, flowers have virtually become the timepieces of our religious calendar, reminding us of the various festivals, as in succession they return, in addition to immortalising the history and events which such festivals commemorate. In many cases, too, it should be remembered, the choice of flowers for dedication to certain saints originated either in their medical virtues or in some old tradition which was supposed to have specially singled them out for this honour.

Footnotes:

1. Sanscrit for lotus. 2. Hindu poem, translated by Sir William Jones. 3. "Flower-lore," p. 118.
4. Folkard's "Plant Legends," p. 245. 5. "Flower-lore," p. 120. 6. Quarterly Review, cxiv. 231.
7. "Flower-lore," p. 2. 8. Ibid. 9. Quarterly Review, cxiv. 235. 10. Ibid., p. 239. 11. "Flower-lore."
12. Folkard's "Plant Legends," p. 44. 13. Folkard's "Plant Legends," p. 395. 14. "Flower-lore," p. 13.
15. Fraser's Magazine, 1870, p. 714. 16. "Flower-lore," p. 14. 17. "Flower-lore," p. 14. 18. Quarterly Review, cxiv. 233; "Flower-lore," p. 15. 19. See Baring-Gould's "Myths of the Middle Ages."
20. "Flower-lore," p. 12. 21. See chapter on Folk-Medicine.

CHAPTER XX.

PLANT SUPERSTITIONS.

The superstitious notions which, under one form or another, have clustered round the vegetable kingdom, hold a prominent place in the field of folk-lore. To give a full and detailed account of these survivals of bygone beliefs, would occupy a volume of no mean size, so thickly scattered are they among the traditions and legendary lore of almost every country. Only too frequently, also, we find the same superstition assuming a very different appearance as it travels from one country to another, until at last it is almost completely divested of its original dress. Repeated changes of this kind, whilst not escaping the notice of the student of comparative folk-lore, are apt to mislead the casual observer who, it may be, assigns to them a particular home in his own country, whereas probably they have travelled, before arriving at their modern destination, thousands of miles in the course of years.

There is said to be a certain mysterious connection between certain plants and animals. Thus, swine when affected with the spleen are supposed to resort to the spleen-wort, and according to Coles, in his "Art of Simpling," the ass does likewise, for he tells us that, "if the asse be oppressed with melancholy, he eates of the herbe asplemon or mill-waste, and eases himself of the swelling of the spleen." One of the popular names of the common sow-thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*) is hare's-palace, from the shelter it is supposed to afford the hare. According to the "Grete Herbale," "if the hare come under it, he is sure that no beast can touch hym." Topsell also, in his "Natural History," alludes to this superstition:--"When hares are overcome with heat, they eat of an herb called *Latuca leporina*, that is, hare's-lettuce, hare's-house, hare's-palace; and there is no disease in this beast the cure whereof she does not seek for in this herb."

The hound's-tongue (*cynoglossum*) has been reputed to have the magical property of preventing dogs barking at a person, if laid beneath the feet; and Gerarde says that wild goats or deer, "when they be wounded with arrows, do shake them out by eating of this plant, and heal their wounds." Bacon in his "Natural History" alludes to another curious idea connected with goats, and says, "There are some tears of trees, which are combed from the beards of goats; for when the goats bite and crop them, especially in the morning, the dew being on, the tear cometh forth, and hangeth upon their beards; of this sort is some kind of laudanum." The columbine was once known as *Herba leonis*, from a belief that it was the lion's favourite plant, and it is said that when bears

were half-starved by hybernating--having remained for days without food--they were suddenly restored by eating the arum. There is a curious tradition in Piedmont, that if a hare be sprinkled with the juice of henbane, all the hares in the neighbourhood will run away as if scared by some invisible power.

Gerarde also alludes to an old belief that cats, "Are much delighted with catmint, for the smell of it is so pleasant unto them, that they rub themselves upon it, and swallow or tumble in it, and also feed on the branches very greedily." And according to an old proverb they have a liking for the plant maram:--

*"If you set it, the cats will eat it;
If you sow it, the cats won't know it."*

Equally fond, too, are cats of valerian, being said to dig up the roots and gnaw them to pieces, an allusion to which occurs in Topsell's "Four-footed Beasts" (1658-81):--"The root of the herb valerian (commonly called Phu) is very like to the eye of a cat, and wheresoever it groweth, if cats come thereunto they instantly dig it up for the love thereof, as I myself have seen in mine own garden, for it smelleth moreover like a cat."

Then there is the moonwort, famous for drawing the nails out of horses' shoes, and hence known by the rustic name of "unshoe the horse;" while the mouse-ear was credited with preventing the horses being hurt when shod.

We have already alluded to the superstitions relating to birds and plants, but may mention another relating to the celandine. One of the well-known names of this plant is swallow-wort, so termed, says Gerarde, not, "because it first springeth at the coming in of the swallows, or dieth when they go away, for it may be found all the year, but because some hold opinion that with this herbe the darns restore eyesight to their young ones, when their eye be put out." Coles strengthens the evidence in favour of this odd notion by adding: "It is known to such as have skill of nature, what wonderful care she hath of the smallest creatures, giving to them a knowledge of medicine to help themselves, if haply diseases annoy them. The swallow cureth her dim eyes with celandine; the wesell knoweth well the virtue of herb-grace; the dove the verven; the dogge dischargeth his mawe with a kind of grasse," &c.

In Italy cumin is given to pigeons for the purpose of taming them, and a curious superstition is that of the "divining-rod," with "its versatile sensibility to water, ore, treasure and thieves," and one whose history is apparently as remote as it is widespread. Francis Lenormant, in his "Chaldean Magic," mentions the divining-rods used by the Magi, wherewith they foretold the future by throwing little sticks of tamarisk-

wood, and adds that divination by wands was known and practised in Babylon, "and that this was even the most ancient mode of divination used in the time of the Accadians." Among the Hindus, even in the Vedic period, magic wands were in use, and the practice still survives in China, where the peach-tree is in demand. Tracing its antecedent history in this country, it appears that the Druids were in the habit of cutting their divining-rods from the apple-tree; and various notices of this once popular fallacy occur from time to time, in the literature of bygone years.

The hazel was formerly famous for its powers of discernment, and it is still held in repute by the Italians. Occasionally, too, as already noticed, the divining-rod was employed for the purpose of detecting the locality of water, as is still the case in Wiltshire. An interesting case was quoted some years ago in the *Quarterly Review* (xxii. 273). A certain Lady N---is here stated to have convinced Dr. Hutton of her possession of this remarkable gift, and by means of it to have indicated to him the existence of a spring of water in one of his fields adjoining the Woolwich College, which, in consequence of the discovery, he was enabled to sell to the college at a higher price. This power Lady N---repeatedly exhibited before credible witnesses, and the *Quarterly Review* of that day considered the fact indisputable. The divining-rod has long been in repute among Cornish miners, and Pryce, in his "*Mineralogia Cornubiensis*," says that many mines have been discovered by this means; but, after giving a minute account of cutting, tying, and using it, he rejects it, because, "Cornwall is so plentifully stored with tin and copper lodes, that some accident every week discovers to us a fresh vein."

Billingsley, in his "*Agricultural Survey of the County of Cornwall*," published in the year 1797, speaks of the belief of the Mendip miners in the efficacy of the mystic rod:--"The general method of discovering the situation and direction of those seams of ore (which lie at various depths, from five to twenty fathoms, in a chasm between two inches of solid rock) is by the help of the divining-rod, vulgarly called josing; and a variety of strong testimonies are adduced in supporting this doctrine. So confident are the common miners of the efficacy, that they scarcely ever sink a shaft but by its direction; and those who are dexterous in the use of it, will mark on the surface the course and breadth of the vein; and after that, with the assistance of the rod, will follow the same course twenty times following blindfolded." Anecdotes of the kind are very numerous, for there are few subjects in folk-lore concerning which more has been written than on the divining-rod, one of the most exhaustive being that of Mr. Baring-Gould in his "*Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*." The literature, too, of the past is rich in allusions to this piece of superstition, and Swift in his "*Virtues of Sid Hamet the Magician's Rod*" (1710) thus refers to it:--

*"They tell us something strange and odd
About a certain magic rod
That, bending down its top, divines
Whene'er the soil has golden mines;
Where there are none, it stands erect,
Scorning to show the least respect.
As ready was the wand of Sid
To bend where golden mines were hid.
In Scottish hills found precious ore,
Where none e'er looked for it before;
And by a gentle bow divined,
How well a Cully's purse was lined;
To a forlorn and broken rake,
Stood without motion like a stake."*

De Quincey has several amusing allusions to this fallacy, affirming that he had actually seen on more than one occasion the process applied with success, and declared that, in spite of all science or scepticism might say, most of the tea-kettles in the Vale of Wrington, North Somersetshire, are filled by rhabdomancy. But it must be admitted that the phenomena of the divining-rod and table-turning are of precisely the same character, both being referable to an involuntary muscular action resulting from a fixedness of idea. Moreover, it should be remembered that experiments with the divining-rod are generally made in a district known to be metalliferous, and therefore the chances are greatly in favour of its bending over or near a mineral lode. On the other hand, it is surprising how many people of culture have, at different times, in this and other countries, displayed a lamentable weakness in partially accepting this piece of superstition. Of the many anecdotes related respecting it, we may quote an amusing one in connection with the celebrated botanist, Linnaeus:--"When he was on one of his voyages, hearing his secretary highly extol the virtues of his divining-wand, he was willing to convince him of its insufficiency, and for that purpose concealed a purse of one hundred ducats under a ranunculus, which grew up by itself in a meadow, and bid the secretary find it if he could. The wand discovered nothing, and Linnaeus' mark was soon trampled down by the company who were present, so that when he went to finish the experiment by fetching the gold himself, he was utterly at a loss where to find it. The man with the wand assisted him, and informed him that it could not lie in the way they were going, but quite the contrary, so pursued the direction of the wand, and actually dug out the gold. Linnaeus thereupon added that such another experiment would be sufficient to make a proselyte of him." [1]

In 1659, the Jesuit, Gaspard Schott, tells us that this magic rod was at this period used in every town in Germany, and that he had frequently had opportunities of seeing it used in the discovery of hidden treasure. He further adds:--"I searched with the greatest care into the question whether the hazel rod had any sympathy with gold and silver, and whether any natural property set it in motion. In like manner, I tried whether a ring of metal, held suspended by a thread in the midst of a tumbler, and which strikes the hours, is moved by any similar force." But many of the mysterious effects of these so-called divining-rods were no doubt due to clever imposture. In the year 1790, Plunet, a native of Dauphiné, claimed a power over the divining-rod which attracted considerable attention in Italy. But when carefully tested by scientific men in Padua, his attempts to discover buried metals completely failed; and at Florence he was detected trying to find out by night what he had secreted to test his powers on the morrow. The astrologer Lilly made sundry experiments with the divining-rod, but was not always successful; and the Jesuit, Kircher, tried the powers of certain rods which were said to have sympathetic influences for particular metals, but they never turned on the approach of these. Once more, in the "Shepherd's Calendar," we find a receipt to make the "Mosaic wand to find hidden treasure" without the intervention of a human operator:--"Cut a hazel wand forked at the upper end like a Y. Peel off the rind, and dry it in a moderate heat, then steep it in the juice of wake-robin or nightshade, and cut the single lower end sharp; and where you suppose any rich mine or hidden treasure is near, place a piece of the same metal you conceive is hid, or in the earth, to the top of one of the forks by a hair, and do the like to the other end; pitch the sharp single end lightly to the ground at the going down of the sun, the moon being in the increase, and in the morning at sunrise, by a natural sympathy, you will find the metal inclining, as it were pointing, to the places where the other is hid."

According to a Tuscany belief, the almond will discover treasures; and the golden rod has long had the reputation in England of pointing to hidden springs of water, as well as to treasures of gold and silver. Similarly, the spring-wort and primrose--the key-flower--revealed the hidden recesses in mountains where treasures were concealed, and the mystic fern-seed, termed "wish-seed," was supposed in the Tyrol to make known hidden gold; and, according to a Lithuanian form of this superstition, one who secures treasures by this means will be pursued by adders, the guardians of the gold. Plants of this kind remind us of the magic "sesame" which, at the command of Ali Baba, in the story of the "Forty Thieves," gave him immediate admission to the secret treasure-cave. Once more, among further plants possessing the same mystic property may be mentioned the sow-thistle, which, when invoked, discloses hidden treasures. In Sicily a branch of the pomegranate tree is

considered to be a most effectual means of ascertaining the whereabouts of concealed wealth. Hence it has been invested with an almost reverential awe, and has been generally employed when search has been made for some valuable lost property. In Silesia, Thuringia, and Bohemia the mandrake is, in addition to its many mystic properties, connected with the idea of hidden treasures.

Numerous plants are said to be either lucky or the reverse, and hence have given rise to all kinds of odd beliefs, some of which still survive in our midst, having come down from a remote period.

There is in many places a curious antipathy to uprooting the house-leek, some persons even disliking to let it blossom, and a similar prejudice seems to have existed against the cuckoo-flower, for, if found accidentally inverted in a May garland, it was at once destroyed. In Prussia it is regarded as ominous for a bride to plant myrtle, although in this country it has the reputation of being a lucky plant. According to a Somersetshire saying, "The flowering myrtle is the luckiest plant to have in your window, water it every morning, and be proud of it." We may note here that there are many odd beliefs connected with the myrtle. "Speaking to a lady," says a correspondent of the *Athenaeum* (Feb. 5, 1848), "of the difficulty which I had always found in getting a slip of myrtle to grow, she directly accounted for my failure by observing that perhaps I had not spread the tail or skirt of my dress, and looked proud during the time I was planting it. It is a popular belief in Somersetshire that unless a slip of myrtle is so planted, it will never take root." The deadly nightshade is a plant of ill omen, and Gerard describing it says, "if you will follow my counsel, deal not with the same in any case, and banish it from your gardens, and the use of it also, being a plant so furious and deadly; for it bringeth such as have eaten thereof into a dead sleep, wherein many have died." There is a strong prejudice to sowing parsley, and equally a great dislike to transplanting it, the latter notion being found in South America. Likewise, according to a Devonshire belief, it is highly unlucky to plant a bed of lilies of the valley, as the person doing so will probably die in the course of the next twelve months.

The withering of plants has long been regarded ominous, and, according to a Welsh superstition, if there are faded leaves in a room where a baby is christened it will soon die. Of the many omens afforded by the oak, we are told that the change of its leaves from their usual colour gave more than once "fatal premonition" of coming misfortunes during the great civil wars; and Bacon mentions a tradition that "if the oak-apple, broken, be full of worms, it is a sign of a pestilent year." In olden times the decay of the bay-tree was considered an omen of disaster, and it is stated that, previous to the death of Nero, though the winter was very mild, all these trees withered to the roots, and that a

great pestilence in Padua was preceded by the same phenomenon. [2]
Shakespeare speaks of this superstition:--

*"'Tis thought the king is dead; we will not stay,
The bay-trees in our county are all withered."*

Lupton, in his "Notable Things," tells us that,

*"If a fir-tree be touched, withered, or burned with lightning, it
signifies that the master or mistress thereof shall shortly die."*

It is difficult, as we have already noted in a previous chapter, to discover why some of our sweetest and fairest spring-flowers should be associated with ill-luck. In the western counties, for instance, one should never take less than a handful of primroses or violets into a farmer's house, as neglect of this rule is said to affect the success of the ducklings and chickens. A correspondent of Notes and Queries (I. Ser. vii. 201) writes:--"My gravity was sorely tried by being called on to settle a quarrel between two old women, arising from one of them having given one primrose to her neighbour's child, for the purpose of making her hens hatch but one egg out of each set of eggs, and it was seriously maintained that the charm had been successful." In the same way it is held unlucky to introduce the first snowdrop of the year into a house, for, as a Sussex woman once remarked, "It looks for all the world like a corpse in its shroud." We may repeat, too, again the familiar adage:--

*"If you sweep the house with blossomed broom in May,
You are sure to sweep the head of the house away."*

And there is the common superstition that where roses and violets bloom in autumn, it is indicative of some epidemic in the following year; whereas, if a white rose put forth unexpectedly, it is believed in Germany to be a sign of death in the nearest house; and in some parts of Essex there is a current belief that sickness or death will inevitably ensue if blossoms of the whitethorn be brought into a house; the idea in Norfolk being that no one will be married from the house during the year. Another ominous sign is that of plants shedding their leaves, or of their blossoms falling to pieces. Thus the peasantry in some places affirm that the dropping of the leaves of a peach-tree betokens a murrain; and in Italy it is held unlucky for a rose to do so. A well-known illustration of this superstition occurred many years ago in the case of the unfortunate Miss Bay, who was murdered at the piazza entrance of Covent Garden by Hackman (April 1779), the following account of which we quote from the "Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis":-- "When the carriage was

announced, and she was adjusting her dress, Mr. Lewis happened to make some remark on a beautiful rose which Miss Kay wore in her bosom. Just as the words were uttered the flower fell to the ground. She immediately stooped to regain it, but as she picked it up, the red leaves scattered themselves on the carpet, and the stalk alone remained in her hand. The poor girl, who had been depressed in spirits before, was evidently affected by this incident, and said, in a slightly faltering voice, 'I trust I am not to consider this as an evil omen!' But soon rallying, she expressed to Mr. Lewis, in a cheerful tone, her hope that they would meet again after the theatre--a hope, alas! Which it was decreed should not be realised." According to a German belief, one who throws a rose into a grave will waste away.

There is a notion prevalent in Dorsetshire that a house wherein the plant "bergamot" is kept will never be free from sickness; and in Norfolk it is said to be unlucky to take into a house a bunch of the grass called "maiden-hair," or, as it is also termed, "dudder-grass." Among further plants of ill omen may be mentioned the bluebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), which in certain parts of Scotland was called "The aul' man's bell," and was regarded with a sort of dread, and commonly left unpulled. In Cumberland, about Cockermouth, the red campion (*Lychnis diurna*) is called "mother-die," and young people believe that if plucked some misfortune will happen to their parents. A similar belief attaches to the herb-robert (*Geranium robertianum*) in West Cumberland, where it is nicknamed "Death come quickly;" and in certain parts of Yorkshire there is a notion that if a child gather the germander speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), its mother will die during the year. Herrick has a pretty allusion to the daffodil:--

*"When a daffodil I see
Hanging down her head t'wards me,
Guess I may what I must be:
First, I shall decline my head;
Secondly, I shall be dead;
Lastly, safely buried."*

In Germany, the marigold is with the greatest care excluded from the flowers with which young women test their love-affairs; and in Austria it is held unlucky to pluck the crocus, as it draws away the strength.

An ash leaf is still frequently employed for invoking good luck, and in Cornwall we find the old popular formula still in use:--

*"Even ash, I do thee pluck,
Hoping thus to meet good luck;
If no good luck I get from thee,
I shall wish thee on the tree."*

And there is the following well-known couplet:--

*"With a four-leaved clover, a double-leaved ash, and a green-topped leave,
You may go before the queen's daughter without asking leave."*

But, on the other hand, the finder of the five-leaved clover, it is said, will have bad luck.

In Scotland [3] it was formerly customary to carry on the person a piece of torch-fir for good luck--a superstition which, Mr. Conway remarks, is found in the gold-mines of California, where the men tip a cone with the first gold they discover, and keep it as a charm to ensure good luck in future.

Nuts, again, have generally been credited with propitious qualities, and have accordingly been extensively used for divination. In some mysterious way, too, they are supposed to influence the population, for when plentiful, there is said to be a corresponding increase of babies. In Russia the peasantry frequently carry a nut in their purses, from a belief that it will act as a charm in their efforts to make money. Sternberg, in his "Northamptonshire Glossary" (163), says that the discovery of a double nut, "presages well for the finder, and unless he mars his good fortune by swallowing both kernels, is considered an infallible sign of approaching 'luck.' The orthodox way in such cases consists in eating one, and throwing the other over the shoulder."

The Icelanders have a curious idea respecting the mountain-ash, affirming that it is an enemy of the juniper, and that if one is planted on one side of a tree, and the other on the other, they will split it. It is also asserted that if both are kept in the same house it will be burnt down; but, on the other hand, there is a belief among some sailors that if rowan-tree be used in a ship, it will sink the vessel unless juniper be found on board. In the Tyrol, the *Osmunda regalis*, called "the blooming fern," is placed over the door for good teeth; and Mr. Conway, too, in his valuable papers, to which we have been often indebted in the previous chapters, says that there are circumstances under which all flowers are injurious. "They must not be laid on the bed of a sick person, according to a Silesian superstition; and in Westphalia and Thuringia, no child under a year old must be permitted to wreath itself with flowers, or it will soon die. Flowers, says a common German saying, must in no case be laid on the mouth of a corpse, since the dead man may chew them, which would make him a 'Nachzehrer,' or one who draws his relatives to the grave after him."

In Hungary, the burnet saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*) is a mystic plant, where it is popularly nicknamed Chaba's salve, there being an old tradition that it was discovered by King Chaba, who cured the wounds of fifteen thousand of his men after a bloody battle fought against his

brother. In Hesse, it is said that with knots tied in willow one may slay a distant enemy; and the Bohemians have a belief that seven-year-old children will become beautiful by dancing in the flax. But many superstitions have clustered round the latter plant, it having in years gone by been a popular notion that it will only flower at the time of day on which it was originally sown. To spin on Saturday is said in Germany to bring ill fortune, and as a warning the following legend is among the household tales of the peasantry:--"Two old women, good friends, were the most industrious spinners in their village, Saturday finding them as engrossed in their work as on the other days of the week. At length one of them died, but on the Saturday evening following she appeared to the other, who, as usual, was busy at her wheel, and showing her burning hand, said:--

*'See what I in hell have won,
Because on Saturday eve I spun.'*"

Flax, nevertheless, is a lucky plant, for in Thuringia, when a young woman gets married, she places flax in her shoes as a charm against poverty. It is supposed, also, to have health-giving virtues; for in Germany, when an infant seems weakly and thrives slowly, it is placed naked upon the turf on Midsummer day, and flax-seed is sprinkled over it; the idea being that as the flax-seed grows so the infant will gradually grow stronger. Of the many beliefs attached to the ash-tree, we are told in the North of England that if the first parings of a child's nails be buried beneath its roots, it will eventually turn out, to use the local phrase, a "top-singer," and there is a popular superstition that wherever the purple honesty (*Lunaria biennis*) flourishes, the cultivators of the garden are noted for their honesty. The snapdragon, which in years gone by was much cultivated for its showy blossoms, was said to have a supernatural influence, and amongst other qualities to possess the power of destroying charms. Many further illustrations of this class of superstition might easily be added, so thickly interwoven are they with the history of most of our familiar wild-flowers. One further superstition may be noticed, an allusion to which occurs in "Henry V." (Act i. sc. i):--

*"The strawberry grows underneath the nettle,
And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best
Neighbour'd by fruit of baser quality;"*

It having been the common notion that plants were affected by the neighbourhood of other plants to such an extent that they imbibed each other's virtues and faults. Accordingly sweet flowers were planted near fruit-trees, with the idea of improving the flavour of the fruit; and, on the

other hand, evil-smelling trees, like the elder, were carefully cleaned away from fruit-trees, lest they should become tainted. [4] Further superstitions have been incidentally alluded to throughout the present volume, necessarily associated as they are with most sections of plant folk-lore. It should also be noticed that in the various folk-tales which have been collected together in recent years, many curious plant superstitions are introduced, although, to suit the surroundings of the story, they have only too frequently been modified, or the reverse. At the same time, embellishments of the kind are interesting, as showing how familiar these traditionary beliefs were in olden times to the story-teller, and how ready he was to avail himself of them.

Footnotes:

1. See Baring-Gerald's "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages." 2. Ingram's "Florica Symbolica," p. 326.

3. Stewart's "Popular Superstitions of the Highlanders." 4. See Ellacombe's "Plant-lore of Shakespeare," p. 319.



CHAPTER XXI.

PLANTS IN FOLK-MEDICINE.

From the earliest times plants have been most extensively used in the cure of disease, although in days of old it was not so much their inherent medicinal properties which brought them into repute as their supposed magical virtues. Oftentimes, in truth, the only merit of a plant lay in the charm formula attached to it, the due utterance of which ensured relief to the patient. Originally there can be no doubt that such verbal forms were prayers, "since dwindled into mystic sentences." [1] Again, before a plant could work its healing powers, due regard had to be paid to the planet under whose influence it was supposed to be; [2] for Aubrey mentions an old belief that if a plant "be not gathered according to the rules of astrology, it hath little or no virtue in it." Hence, in accordance with this notion, we find numerous directions for the cutting and preparing of certain plants for medicinal purposes, a curious list of which occurs in Culpepper's "British Herbal and Family Physician." This old herbalist, who was a strong believer in astrology, tells us that such as are of this way of thinking, and none else, are fit to be physicians. But he was not the only one who had strict views on this matter, as the literature of his day proves--astrology, too, having held a prominent place in most of the gardening books of the same period. Michael Drayton, who has chronicled so many of the credulities of his time, referring to the longevity of antediluvian men, writes:--

"Besides, in medicine, simples had the power That none need then the planetary hour To help their workinge, they so juiceful were."

The adder's-tongue, if plucked during the wane of the moon, was a cure for tumours, and there is a Swabian belief that one, "who on Friday of the full moon pulls up the amaranth by the root, and folding it in a white cloth, wears it against his naked breast, will be made bullet-proof." [3] Consumptive patients, in olden times, were three times passed, "Through a circular wreath of woodbine, cut during the increase of the March moon, and let down over the body from head to foot." [4] In France, too, at the present day, the vervain is gathered under the different changes of the moon, with secret incantations, after which it is said to possess remarkable curative properties.

In Cornwall, the club-moss, if properly gathered, is considered "good against all diseases of the eye." The mode of procedure is this:--"On the third day of the moon, when the thin crescent is seen for the first time, show it the knife with which the moss is to be cut, and repeat this formula:--

*'As Christ healed the issue of blood,
Do thou cut what thou cuttest for good.'*

At sundown, the operator, after carefully washing his hands, is to cut the club-moss kneeling. It is then to be wrapped in a white cloth, and subsequently boiled in water taken from the spring nearest to its place of growth. This may be used as a fomentation, or the club-moss may be made into an ointment with the butter from the milk of a new cow." [5]

Some plants have, from time immemorial, been much in request from the season or period of their blooming, beyond which fact it is difficult to account for the virtues ascribed to them. Thus, among the Romans, the first anemone of the year, when gathered with this form of incantation, "I gather thee for a remedy against disease," was regarded as a preservative from fever; a survival of which belief still prevails in our own country:--

*"The first spring-blown anemone she in his doublet wove,
To keep him safe from pestilence wherever he should rove."*

On the other hand, in some countries there is a very strong prejudice against the wild anemone, the air being said "to be so tainted by them, that they who inhale it often incur severe sickness." [6] Similarly we may compare the notion that flowers blooming out of season have a fatal significance, as we have noted elsewhere.

The sacred associations attached to many plants have invested them, at all times, with a scientific repute in the healing art, instances of which may be traced up to a very early period. Thus, the peony, which, from its mythical divine origin, was an important flower in the primitive pharmacopoeia, has even in modern times retained its reputation; and to this day Sussex mothers put necklaces of beads turned from the peony root around their children's necks, to prevent convulsions and to assist them in their teething. When worn on the person, it was long considered, too, a most effectual remedy for insanity, and Culpepper speaks of its virtues in the cure of the falling sickness. [7] The thistle, sacred to Thor, is another plant of this kind, and indeed instances are very numerous. On the other hand, some plants, from their great virtues as "all-heals," it would seem, had such names as "Angelica" and "Archangel" bestowed on them. [8]

In later times many plants became connected with the name of Christ, and with the events of the crucifixion itself--facts which occasionally explain their mysterious virtues. Thus the vervain, known as the "holy herb," and which was one of the sacred plants of the Druids, has long been held in repute, the subjoined rhyme assigning as the reason:--

*"All hail, thou holy herb, vervain,
Growing on the ground;
On the Mount of Calvary
There wast thou found;
Thou helpest many a grief,
And staunchest many a wound.
In the name of sweet Jesu,
I lift thee from the ground."*

To quote one or two further instances, a popular recipe for preventing the prick of a thorn from festering is to repeat this formula:--

*"Christ was of a virgin born,
And he was pricked with a thorn,
And it did neither bell nor swell,
And I trust in Jesus this never will."*

In Cornwall, some years ago, the following charm was much used, forms of which may occasionally be heard at the present day:--

*"Happy man that Christ was born,
He was crowned with a thorn;
He was pierced through the skin,
For to let the poison in.
But His five wounds, so they say,
Closed before He passed away.
In with healing, out with thorn,
Happy man that Christ was born."*

Another version used in the North of England is this:--

*"Unto the Virgin Mary our Saviour was horn,
And on his head he wore a crown of thorn;
If you believe this true, and mind it well,
This hurt will never fester nor swell."*

The *Angelica sylvestris* was popularly known as "Holy Ghost," from the angel-like properties therein having been considered good "against poisons, pestilent agues, or the pestilence."

Cockayne, in his "Saxon Leechdoms," mentions an old poem descriptive of the virtues of the mugwort:--

*"Thou hast might for three,
And against thirty,
For venom availest
For plying vile things."*

So, too, certain plants of the saints acquired a notoriety for specific virtues; and hence St. John's wort, with its leaves marked with blood-like spots, which appear, according to tradition, on the anniversary of his decollation, is still "the wonderful herb" that cures all sorts of wounds. Herb-bennet, popularly designated "Star of the earth," a name applied to the avens, hemlock, and valerian, should properly be, says Dr. Prior, "St. Benedict's herb, a name assigned to such plants as were supposed to be antidotes, in allusion to a legend of this saint, which represents that upon his blessing a cup of poisoned wine which a monk had given to destroy him, the glass was shattered to pieces." In the same way, herb-gerard was called from St. Gerard, who was formerly invoked against gout, a complaint for which this plant was once in high repute. St. James's wort was so called from its being used for the diseases of horses, of which this great pilgrim-saint was the patron. It is curious in how many unexpected ways these odd items of folk-lore in their association with the saints meet us, showing that in numerous instances it is entirely their association with certain saints that has made them of medical repute.

Some trees and plants have gained a medical notoriety from the fact of their having a mystical history, and from the supernatural qualities ascribed to them. But, as Bulwer-Lytton has suggested in his "Strange Story," the wood of certain trees to which magical properties are ascribed may in truth possess virtues little understood, and deserving of careful investigation. Thus, among these, the rowan would take its place, as would the common hazel, from which the miner's divining-rod is always cut. [9] An old-fashioned charm to cure the bite of an adder was to lay a cross formed of two pieces of hazel-wood on the ground, repeating three times this formula [10]:--

*"Underneath this hazelin mote,
There's a braggotty worm with a speckled throat,
Nine double is he;
Now from nine double to eight double
And from eight double to seven double-ell."*

The mystical history of the apple accounts for its popularity as a medical agent, although, of course, we must not attribute all the lingering rustic cures to this source. Thus, according to an old Devonshire rhyme,

*"Eat an apple going to bed,
Make the doctor beg his bread."*

Its juice has long been deemed potent against warts, and a Lincolnshire cure for eyes affected by rheumatism or weakness is a poultice made of rotten apples.

The oak, long famous for its supernatural strength and power, has been much employed in folk-medicine. A German cure for ague is to walk round an oak and say:--

*"Good evening, thou good one old;
I bring thee the warm and the cold."*

Similarly, in our own country, oak-trees planted at the junction of cross-roads were much resorted to by persons suffering from ague, for the purpose of transferring to them their complaint, [11] and elsewhere allusion has already been made to the practice of curing sickly children by passing through a split piece of oak. A German remedy for gout is to take hold of an oak, or of a young shoot already felled, and to repeat these words:--

*"Oak-shoot, I to thee complain,
All the torturing gout plagues me;
I cannot go for it,
Thou canst stand it.
The first bird that flies above thee,
To him give it in his flight,
Let him take it with him in the air."*

Another plant, which from its mystic character has been used for various complaints, is the elder. In Bohemia, three spoonful of the water which has been used to bathe an invalid are poured under an elder-tree; and a Danish cure for toothache consists in placing an elder-twigg in the mouth, and then sticking it in a wall, saying, "Depart, thou evil spirit." The mysterious origin and surroundings of the mistletoe have invested it with a widespread importance in old folk-lore remedies, many of which are, even now-a-days, firmly credited; a reputation, too, bestowed upon it by the Druids, who styled it "all-heal," as being an antidote for all diseases. Culpepper speaks of it as "good for the grief of the sinew, itch, sores, and toothache, the biting of mad dogs and venomous beasts;" while Sir Thomas Browne alludes to its virtues in cases of epilepsy. In France, amulets formed of mistletoe were much worn; and in Sweden, a finger-ring made of its wood is an antidote against sickness. The mandrake, as a mystic plant, was extensively sold for medicinal purposes, and in Kent may be occasionally found kept to cure barrenness; [12] and it may be remembered that La Fontaine's fable, La Mandragore, turns upon its supposed power of producing children. How potent its effects were formerly held may be gathered from the very many allusions to its mystic properties in the literature of bygone years. Columella, in his well-known lines, says:--

*"Whose roots show half a man, whose juice
With madness strikes."*

Shakespeare speaks of it as an opiate, and on the Continent it was much used for amulets.

Again, certain plants seem to have been specially in high repute in olden times from the marvellous influence they were credited with exercising over the human frame; consequently they were much valued by both old and young; for who would not retain the vigour of his youth, and what woman would not desire to preserve the freshness of her beauty?

One of the special virtues of rosemary, for instance, was its ability to make old folks young again. A story is told of a gouty and crooked old queen, who sighed with longing regret to think that her young dancing-days were gone, so:--

*"Of rosmaryn she took six pownde,
And grounde it well in a stownde,"*

And then mixed it with water, in which she bathed three times a day, taking care to anoint her head with "gode balm" afterwards. In a very short time her old flesh fell away, and she became so young, tender, and fresh, that she began to look out for a husband. [13]

The common fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) was supposed to give strength to the constitution, and was regarded as highly restorative. Longfellow, in his "Goblet of Life," apparently alludes to our fennel:--

*"Above the lowly plant it towers,
The fennel, with its yellow flowers;
And in an earlier age than ours
Was gifted with the wondrous powers
Lost vision to restore.*

*It gave new strength and fearless mood,
And gladiators, fierce and rude,
Mingled it in their daily food,
And he who battled and subdued,
The wreath of fennel wore."*

The lady's-mantle, too (*Alchemilla vulgaris*), was once in great request, for, according to Hoffman, it had the power of "restoring feminine beauty, however faded, to its early freshness;" and the wild tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*), laid to soak in buttermilk for nine days, had

the reputation of "making the complexion very fair." [14] Similarly, also, the great burnet saxifrage was said to remove freckles; and according to the old herbalists, an infusion of the common centaury (*Erythraea centaureum*) possessed the same property. [15] The hawthorn, too, was in repute among the fair sex, for, according to an old piece of proverbial lore:--

*"The fair maid who, the first of May,
Goes to the fields at break of day,
And washes in dew from the hawthorn tree,
Will ever after handsome be;"*

And the common fumitory, "was used when gathered in wedding hours, and boiled in water, milk, and whey, as a wash for the complexion of rustic maids." [16] In some parts of France the water-hemlock (*Ceanothe crocata*), known with us as the "dead-tongue," from its paralyzing effects on the organs of voice, was used to destroy moles; and the yellow toad-flax (*Linaria vulgaris*) is described as "cleansing the skin wonderfully of all sorts of deformity." Another plant of popular renown was the knotted figwort (*Scrophularia nodosa*), for Gerard censures "divers who doe rashly teach that if it be hanged about the necke, or else carried about one, it keepeth a man in health." Coles, speaking of the mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), says that, "if a footman take mugwort and put it in his shoes in the morning, he may go forty miles before noon and not be weary;" but as far back as the time of Pliny its remarkable properties were known, for he says, "The wayfaring man that hath the herb tied about him feeleth no weariness at all, and he can never be hurt by any poisonous medicine, by any wild beast, neither yet by the sun itself." The far-famed betony was long credited with marvellous medicinal properties, and hence the old saying which recommends a person when ill "to sell his coat and buy betony." A species of thistle was once believed to have the curious virtue of driving away melancholy, and was hence termed the "melancholy thistle." According to Dioscorides, "the root borne about one doth expel melancholy and remove all diseases connected therewith," but it was to be taken in wine.

On the other hand, certain plants have been credited at most periods with hurtful and injurious properties. Thus, there is a popular idea that during the flowering of the bean more cases of lunacy occur than at any other season. [17] It is curious to find the apple--such a widespread curative--regarded as a bane, an illustration of which is given by Mr. Conway. [18] In Swabia it is said that an apple plucked from a graft on the whitethorn will, if eaten by a pregnant woman, increase her pains. On the Continent, the elder, when used as a birch, is said to check boys'

growth, a property ascribed to the knot-grass, as in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Coxcomb" (Act ii. sc. 2):--

"We want a boy extremely for this function, Kept under for a year with milk and knot-grass."

The cat-mint, when chewed, created quarrelsomeness, a property said by the Italians to belong to the rampion.

Occasionally much attention in folk-medicine has been paid to lucky numbers; a remedy, in order to prove efficacious, having to be performed in accordance with certain numerical rules. In Devonshire, poultices must be made of seven different kinds of herbs, and a cure for thrush is this:--"Three rushes are taken from any running stream, passed separately through the mouth of the infant, and then thrown back into the water. As the current bears them away, so, it is believed, will the thrush leave the child."

Similarly, in Brandenburg, if a person is afflicted with dizziness, he is recommended to run after sunset, naked, three times through a field of flax; after doing so, the flax will at once "take the dizziness to itself." A Sussex cure for ague is to eat sage leaves, fasting, nine mornings in succession; while Flemish folk-lore enjoins any one who has the ague to go early in the morning to an old willow, make three knots in one of its branches, and say "Good morrow, old one; I give thee the cold; good morrow, old one." A very common cure for warts is to tie as many knots on a hair as there are warts, and to throw the hair away; while an Irish charm is to give the patient nine leaves of dandelion, three leaves being eaten on three successive mornings. Indeed, the efficacy of numbers is not confined to any one locality; and Mr. Folkard [19] mentions an instance in Cuba where, "thirteen cloves of garlic at the end of a cord, worn round the neck for thirteen days, are considered a safeguard against jaundice." It is necessary, however, that the wearer, in the middle of the night of the thirteenth day, should proceed to the corner of two streets, take off his garlic necklet, and, flinging it behind him, run home without turning round to see what has become of it. Similarly, six knots of elderwood are employed "in a Yorkshire incantation to ascertain if beasts are dying from witchcraft." [20] In Thuringia, on the extraction of a tooth, the person must eat three daisies to be henceforth free from toothache. In Cornwall [21] bramble leaves are made use of in cases of scalds and inflammatory diseases. Nine leaves are moistened with spring-water, and "these are applied to the burned or diseased parts." While this is being done, for every bramble leaf the following charm is repeated three times:--

*"There came three angels out of the east,
One brought fire and two brought frost;
Out fire and in frost,*

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Of the thousand and one plants used in popular folk-medicine we can but give a few illustrations, so numerous are these old cures for the ills to which flesh is heir. Thus, for deafness, the juice of onion has been long recommended, and for chilblains, a Derbyshire cure is to thrash them with holly, while in some places the juice of the leek mixed with cream is held in repute. To exterminate warts a host of plants have been recommended; the juice of the dandelion being in favour in the Midland counties, whereas in the North, one has but to hang a snail on a thorn, and as the poor creature wastes away the warts will disappear. In Leicestershire the ash is employed, and in many places the elder is considered efficacious. Another old remedy is to prick the wart with a gooseberry thorn passed through a wedding-ring; and according to a Cornish belief, the first blackberry seen will banish warts. Watercress laid against warts was formerly said to drive them away. A rustic specific for whooping-cough in Hampshire is to drink new milk out of a cup made of the variegated holly; while in Sussex the excrescence found on the briar, and popularly known as "robin red-breast's cushion," is in demand. In consumption and diseases of the lungs, St. Fabian's nettle, the crocus, the betony, and horehound, have long been in request, and sea-southern-wood or mugwort, occasionally corrupted into "muggons," was once a favourite prescription in Scotland. A charming girl, whom consumption had brought to the brink of the grave, was lamented by her lover, whereupon a good-natured mermaid sang to him:--

*"Wad ye let the bonnie May die in your hand,
And the mugwort flowering i' the land?"*

Thereupon, tradition says, he administered the juice of this life-giving plant to his fair lady-love, who "arose and blessed the bestower for the return of health." Water in which peas have been boiled is given for measles, and a Lincolnshire recipe for cramp is cork worn on the person. A popular cure for ringworm in Scotland is a decoction of sun-spurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia*), or, as it is locally termed, "mare's milk." In the West of England to bite the first fern seen in spring is an antidote for toothache, and in certain parts of Scotland the root of the yellow iris chopped up and chewed is said to afford relief. Some, again, recommend a double hazel-nut to be carried in the pocket, [22] and the elder, as a Danish cure, has already been noticed.

Various plants were, in days gone by, used for the bites of mad dogs and to cure hydrophobia. Angelica, madworts, and several forms of lichens were favourite remedies. The root of balaustrium, with storax, cypress-nuts, soot, olive-oil, and wine was the receipt, according to

Bonaventura, of Cardinal Richelieu. Among other popular remedies were beetroot, box leaves, cabbage, cucumbers, black currants, digitalis, and euphorbia. [23] A Russian remedy was *Genista sentoria*, and in Greece rose-leaves were used internally and externally as a poultice. Horse-radish, crane's-bill, strawberry, and herb-gerard are old remedies for gout, and in Westphalia apple-juice mixed with saffron is administered for jaundice; while an old remedy for boils is dock-tea. For ague, cinquefoil and yarrow were recommended, and tansy leaves are worn in the shoe by the Sussex peasantry; and in some places common groundsel has been much used as a charm. Angelica was in olden times used as an antidote for poisons. The juice of the arum was considered good for the plague, and Gerarde tells us that Henry VIII. was, "wont to drink the distilled water of broom-flowers against surfeits and diseases thereof arising." An Irish recipe for sore-throat is a cabbage leaf tied round the throat, and the juice of cabbage taken with honey was formerly given as a cure for hoarseness or loss of voice. [24] Agrimony, too, was once in repute for sore throats, cancers, and ulcers; and as far back as the time of Pliny the almond was given as a remedy for inebriety. For rheumatism the burdock was in request, and many of our peasantry keep a potato in their pocket as charms, some, again, carrying a chestnut, either begged or stolen. As an antidote for fevers the carnation was prescribed, and the cowslip, and the hop, have the reputation of inducing sleep. The dittany and plantain, like the golden-rod, nicknamed "wound-weed," have been used for the healing of wounds, and the application of a dock-leaf for the sting of a nettle is a well-known cure among our peasantry, having been embodied in the old familiar adage:--

*"Nettle out, dock in--
Dock remove the nettle-sting,"*

Of which there are several versions; as in Wiltshire, where the child uses this formula:--

*"Out 'ettle
In dock.
Dock shall ha'a a new smock,
'Ettle zbant
Ha' nanun."*

The young tops of the common nettle are still made by the peasantry into nettle-broth, and, amongst other directions enjoined in an old Scotch rhyme, it is to be cut in the month of June, "ere it's in the blume":--

*"Cou' it by the auld wa's,
Cou' it where the sun ne'er fa'
Stoo it when the day daws,
Cou' the nettle early."*

The juice of fumitory is said to clear the sight, and the kennel-wort was once a popular specific for the king's-evil. As disinfectants, wormwood and rue were much in demand; and hence Tusser says:--

*"What savour is better, if physicke be true,
For places infected, than wormwood and rue?"*

For depression, thyme was recommended, and a Manx preservative against all kinds of infectious diseases is ragwort. The illustrations we have given above show in how many ways plants have been in demand as popular curatives. And although an immense amount of superstition has been interwoven with folk-medicine, there is a certain amount of truth in the many remedies which for centuries have been, with more or less success, employed by the peasantry, both at home and abroad.

Footnotes:

1. See Tylor's "Primitive Culture," ii.
2. See Folkard's "Plant-lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 164.
3. "Mystic Trees and Shrubs," p. 717.
4. Folkard's "Plant-lore," p. 379.
5. Hunt's "Popular Romances of the West of England," 1871, p. 415.
6. Folkard's "Plant-lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 216.
7. See Black's "Folk-medicine," 1883, p. 195.
8. Quarterly Review, cxiv. 245.
9. "Sacred Trees and Flowers," Quarterly Review, cxiv. 244.
10. Folkard's "Plant Legends," 364.
11. Fraser's Magazine, 1870, p. 591.
12. "Mystic Trees and Plants;" Fraser's Magazine, 1870, p. 708.
13. "Reliquiae Antiquae," Wright and Halliwell, i. 195; Quarterly Review, 1863, cxiv. 241.
14. Coles, "The Art of Simpling," 1656.
15. Anne Pratt's "Flowering Plants of Great Britain," iv. 9.
16. Black's "Folk-medicine," p. 201.
17. Folkard's "Plant-Lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 248.
18. Fraser's Magazine, 1870, p. 591.
19. "Plant-Lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 349.
20. Black's "Folk-medicine," p. 185.
21. See Hunt's "Popular Romances of the West of England."
22. Black's "Folk-medicine," p. 193.
23. "Rabies or Hydrophobia," T. M. Dolan, 1879, p. 238.
24. Black's "Folk-medicine," p. 193.

CHAPTER XXII.

PLANTS AND THEIR LEGENDARY HISTORY.

Many of the legends of the plant-world have been incidentally alluded to in the preceding pages. Whether we review their mythological history as embodied in the traditionary stories of primitive times, or turn to the existing legends of our own and other countries in modern times, it is clear that the imagination has at all times bestowed some of its richest and most beautiful fancies on trees and flowers. Even, too, the rude and ignorant savage has clothed with graceful conceptions many of the plants which, either for their grandeur or utility, have attracted his notice. The old idea, again, of metamorphosis, by which persons under certain peculiar cases were changed into plants, finds a place in many of the modern plant-legends. Thus there is the well-known story of the wayside plantain, commonly termed "way-bread," which, on account of its so persistently haunting the track of man, has given rise to the German story that it was formerly a maiden who, whilst watching by the wayside for her lover, was transformed into this plant. But once in seven years it becomes a bird, either the cuckoo, or the cuckoo's servant, the "dinnick," as it is popularly called in Devonshire, the German "wiedhopf" which is said to follow its master everywhere.

This story of the plantain is almost identical with one told in Germany of the endive or succory. A patient girl, after waiting day by day for her betrothed for many a month, at last, worn out with watching, sank exhausted by the wayside and expired. But before many days had passed, a little flower with star-like blossoms sprang up on the spot where the broken-hearted maiden had breathed her final sigh, which was henceforth known as the "Wegewarte," the watcher of the road. Mr. Folkard quotes an ancient ballad of Austrian Silesia which recounts how a young girl mourned for seven years the loss of her lover, who had fallen in war. But when her friends tried to console her, and to procure for her another lover, she replied, "I shall cease to weep only when I become a wild-flower by the wayside." By the North American Indians, the plantain or "way-bread" is "the white man's foot," to which Longfellow, in speaking of the English settlers, alludes in his "Hiawatha":--

*"Wheresoe'er they move, before them
Swarms the stinging fly, the Ahmo,
Swarms the bee, the honey-maker;
Wheresoe'er they tread, beneath them*

*Springs a flower unknown among us,
Springs the white man's foot in blossom."*

Between certain birds and plants there exists many curious traditions, as in the case of the nightingale and the rose. According to a piece of Persian folklore, whenever the rose is plucked, the nightingale utters a plaintive cry, because it cannot endure to see the object of its love injured. In a legend told by the Persian poet Attar, we are told how all the birds appeared before Solomon, and complained that they were unable to sleep from the nightly wailings of the nightingale. The bird, when questioned as to the truth of this statement, replied that his love for the rose was the cause of his grief. Hence this supposed love of the nightingale for the rose has been frequently the subject of poetical allusion. Lord Byron speaks of it in the "Giaour":--

*"The rose o'er crag or vale,
Sultana of the nightingale,
The maid for whom his melody,
His thousand songs are heard on high,
Blooms blushing to her lover's tale,
His queen, the garden queen, his rose,
Unbent by winds, unchilled by snows."*

Thackeray, too, has given a pleasing rendering of this favourite legend:--

*"Under the boughs I sat and listened still,
I could not have my fill.
'How comes,' I said, 'such music to his bill?
Tell me for whom he sings so beautiful a trill.'*

*'Once I was dumb,' then did the bird disclose,
'But looked upon the rose,
And in the garden where the loved one grows,
I straightway did begin sweet music to compose.'"*

Mrs. Browning, in her "Lay of the Early Rose," alludes to this legend, and Moore in his "Lalla Rookh" asks:--

*"Though rich the spot
With every flower this earth has got,
What is it to the nightingale,
If there his darling rose is not?"*

But the rose is not the only plant for which the nightingale is said to have a predilection, there being an old notion that its song is never heard except where cowslips are to be found in profusion. Experience, however, only too often proves the inaccuracy of this assertion. We may also quote the following note from Yarrell's "British Birds" (4th ed., i. 316):--"Walcott, in his 'Synopsis of British Birds' (vol. ii. 228), says that the nightingale has been observed to be met with only where the cowslip grows kindly, and the assertion receives a partial approval from Montagu; but whether the statement be true or false, its converse certainly cannot be maintained, for Mr. Watson gives the cowslip (*Primula veris*) as found in all the 'provinces' into which he divides Great Britain, as far north as Caithness and Shetland, where we know that the nightingale does not occur." A correspondent of *Notes and Queries* (5th Ser. ix. 492) says that in East Sussex, on the borders of Kent, "the cowslip is quite unknown, but nightingales are as common as blackberries there."

A similar idea exists in connection with hops; and, according to a tradition current in Yorkshire, the nightingale made its first appearance in the neighbourhood of Doncaster when hops were planted. But this, of course, is purely imaginary, and in Hargrove's "History of Knaresborough" (1832) we read: "In the opposite wood, called Birkans Wood (opposite to the Abbey House), during the summer evenings, the nightingale:--

*'Sings darkling, and, in shadiest covert hid,
Tunes her nocturnal lay.'*"

Of the numerous stories connected with the origin of the mistletoe, one is noticed by Lord Bacon, to the effect that a certain bird, known as the "missel-bird," fed upon a particular kind of seed, which, through its incapacity to digest, it evacuated whole, whereupon the seed, falling on the boughs of trees, vegetated and produced the mistletoe. The magic springwort, which reveals hidden treasures, has a mysterious connection with the woodpecker, to which we have already referred. Among further birds which are in some way or other connected with plants is the eagle, which plucks the wild lettuce, with the juice of which it smears its eyes to improve its vision; while the hawk was supposed, for the same purpose, to pluck the hawk-bit.

Similarly, writes Mr. Folkard, [1] pigeons and doves made use of vervain, which was termed "pigeon's-grass." Once more, the cuckoo, according to an old proverbial rhyme, must eat three meals of cherries before it ceases its song; and it was formerly said that orchids sprang from the seed of the thrush and the blackbird. Further illustrations might

be added, whereas some of the many plants named after well-known birds are noticed elsewhere.

An old Alsatian belief tells us that bats possessed the power of rendering the eggs of storks unfruitful. Accordingly, when once a stork's egg was touched by a bat it became sterile; and in order to preserve it from the injurious influence, the stork placed in its nest some branches of the maple, which frightened away every intruding bat. [2] There is an amusing legend of the origin of the bramble:--The cormorant was once a wool merchant. He entered into partnership with the bramble and the bat, and they freighted a large ship with wool. She was wrecked, and the firm became bankrupt. Since that disaster the bat skulks about till midnight to avoid his creditors, the cormorant is for ever diving into the deep to discover its foundered vessel, while the bramble seizes hold of every passing sheep to make up his loss by stealing the wool.

Returning to the rose, we may quote one or two legendary stories relating to its origin. Thus Sir John Mandeville tells us how when a holy maiden of Bethlehem, "blamed with wrong and slandered," was doomed to death by fire, "she made her prayers to our Lord that He would help her, as she was not guilty of that sin;" whereupon the fire was suddenly quenched, and the burning brands became red "roses," and the brands that were not kindled became white "roses" full of roses. "And these were the first roses and roses, both white and red, that ever any man sought." Henceforth, says Mr. King,[3] the rose became the flower of martyrs. "It was a basket full of roses that the martyr Saint Dorothea sent to the notary of Theophilus from the garden of Paradise; and roses, says the romance, sprang up all over the field of Roncevaux, where Roland and the douze pairs had stained the soil with their blood."

The colour of the rose has been explained by various legends, the Turks attributing its red colour to the blood of Mohammed. Herrick, referring to one of the old classic stories of its divine origin, writes:--

"Tis said, as Cupid danced among the gods, he down the nectar flung,
Which, on the white rose being shed, made it for ever after red."

A pretty origin has been assigned to the moss-rose (*Rosa muscosa*):--
"The angel who takes care of flowers, and sprinkles upon them the dew in the still night, slumbered on a spring day in the shade of a rosebush, and when she awoke she said, 'Most beautiful of my children, I thank thee for thy refreshing odour and cooling shade; could you now ask any favour, how willingly would I grant it!' 'Adorn me then with a new charm,' said the spirit of the rose-bush; and the angel adorned the loveliest of flowers with the simple moss."

A further Roumanian legend gives another poetic account of the rose's origin. "It is early morning, and a young princess comes down into

her garden to bathe in the silver waves of the sea. The transparent whiteness of her complexion is seen through the slight veil which covers it, and shines through the blue waves like the morning star in the azure sky. She springs into the sea, and mingles with the silvery rays of the sun, which sparkle on the dimples of the laughing waves. The sun stands still to gaze upon her; he covers her with kisses, and forgets his duty. Once, twice, thrice has the night advanced to take her sceptre and reign over the world; twice had she found the sun upon her way. Since that day the lord of the universe has changed the princess into a rose; and this is why the rose always hangs her head and blushes when the sun gazes on her." There are a variety of rose-legends of this kind in different countries, the universal popularity of this favourite blossom having from the earliest times made it justly in repute; and according to the Hindoo mythologists, Pagoda Sin, one of the wives of Vishnu, was discovered in a rose--a not inappropriate locality.

Like the rose, many plants have been extensively associated with sacred legendary lore, a circumstance which frequently explains their origin. A pretty legend, for instance, tells us how an angel was sent to console Eve when mourning over the barren earth. Now, no flower grew in Eden, and the driving snow kept falling to form a pall for earth's untimely funeral after the fall of man. But as the angel spoke, he caught a flake of falling snow, breathed on it, and bade it take a form, and bud and blow. Ere it reached the ground it had turned into a beautiful flower, which Eve prized more than all the other fair plants in Paradise; for the angel said to her:--

*"This is an earnest, Eve, to thee,
That sun and summer soon shall be."*

The angel's mission ended, he departed, but where he had stood a ring of snowdrops formed a lovely posy.

This legend reminds us of one told by the poet Shiraz, respecting the origin of the forget-me-not:--"It was in the golden morning of the early world, when an angel sat weeping outside the closed gates of Eden. He had fallen from his high estate through loving a daughter of earth, nor was he permitted to enter again until she whom he loved had planted the flowers of the forget-me-not in every corner of the world. He returned to earth and assisted her, and they went hand in hand over the world planting the forget-me-not. When their task was ended, they entered Paradise together; for the fair woman, without tasting the bitterness of death, became immortal like the angel, whose love her beauty had won, when she sat by the river twining the forget-me-not in her hair." This is a more poetic legend than the familiar one given in Mill's "History of Chivalry," which tells how the lover, when trying to

pick some blossoms of the myosotis for his lady-love, was drowned, his last words as he threw the flowers on the bank being "Forget me not." Another legend, already noticed, would associate it with the magic spring-wort, which revealed treasure-caves hidden in the mountains. The traveler enters such an opening, but after filling his pockets with gold, pays no heed to the fairy's voice, "Forget not the best," i.e., the spring-wort, and is severed in twain by the mountain clashing together.

In speaking of the various beliefs relative to plant life in a previous chapter, we have enumerated some of the legends which would trace the origin of many plants to the shedding of human blood, a belief which is a distinct survival of a very primitive form of belief, and enters very largely into the stories told in classical mythology. The dwarf elder is said to grow where blood has been shed, and it is nicknamed in Wales "Plant of the blood of man," with which may be compared its English name of "death-wort." It is much associated in this country with the Danes, and tradition says that wherever their blood was shed in battle, this plant afterwards sprang up; hence its names of Dane-wort, Dane-weed, or Dane's-blood. One of the bell-flower tribe, the clustered bell-flower, has a similar legend attached to it; and according to Miss Pratt, "in the village of Bartlow there are four remarkable hills, supposed to have been thrown up by the Danes as monumental memorials of the battle fought in 1006 between Canute and Edmund Ironside. Some years ago the clustered bell-flower was largely scattered about these mounds, the presence of which the cottagers attributed to its having sprung from the Dane's blood," under which name the flower was known in the neighbourhood.

The rose-coloured lotus or melilot is, from the legend, said to have been sprung from the blood of a lion slain by the Emperor Adrian; and, in short, folk-lore is rich in stories of this kind. Some legends are of a more romantic kind, as that which explains the origin of the wallflower, known in Palestine as the "blood-drops of Christ." In bygone days a castle stood near the river Tweed, in which a fair maiden was kept prisoner, having plighted her troth and given her affection to a young heir of a hostile clan. But blood having been shed between the chiefs on either side, the deadly hatred thus engendered forbade all thoughts of a union. The lover tried various stratagems to obtain his fair one, and at last succeeded in gaining admission attired as a wandering troubadour, and eventually arranged that she should effect her escape, while he awaited her arrival with an armed force. But this plan, as told by Herrick, was unsuccessful:--

*"Up she got upon a wall,
Attempted down to slide withal;
But the silken twist untied,
She fell, and, bruised, she died.
Love, in pity to the deed,*

*And her loving luckless speed,
Twined her to this plant we call
Now the 'flower of the wall.'"*

The tea-tree in China, from its marked effect on the human constitution, has long been an agent of superstition, and been associated with the following legend, quoted by Schleiden. It seems that a devout and pious hermit having, much against his will, been overtaken by sleep in the course of his watchings and prayers, so that his eyelids had closed, tore them from his eyes and threw them on the ground in holy wrath. But his act did not escape the notice of a certain god, who caused a tea-shrub to spring out from them, the leaves of which exhibit, "the form of an eyelid bordered with lashes, and possess the gift of hindering sleep." Sir George Temple, in his "Excursions in the Mediterranean," mentions a legend relative to the origin of the geranium. It is said that the prophet Mohammed having one day washed his shirt, threw it upon a mallow plant to dry; but when it was afterwards taken away, its sacred contact with the mallow was found to have changed the plant into a fine geranium, which now for the first time came into existence.

Footnotes:

1. "Plant-Lore Legends and Lyrics."
2. Folkard's "Plant Lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 430.
3. "Sacred Trees and Flowers," Quarterly Review, cxiv. 239.



CHAPTER XXIII.

MYSTIC PLANTS.

The mystic character and history of certain plants meet us in every age and country. The gradual evolution of these curious plants of belief must, no doubt, partly be ascribed to their mythical origin, and in many cases to their sacred associations; while, in some instances, it is not surprising that, "any plant which produced a marked effect upon the human constitution should become an object of superstition." [1] A further reason why sundry plants acquired a mystic notoriety was their peculiar manner of growth, which, through not being understood by early botanists, caused them to be invested with mystery. Hence a variety of combinations have produced those mystic properties of trees and flowers which have inspired them with such superstitious veneration in our own and other countries. According to Mr. Conway, the apple, of all fruits, seems to have had the widest and most mystical history. Thus, "Aphrodite bears it in her hand as well as Eve; the serpent guards it, the dragon watches it. It is the healing fruit of the Arabian tribes. Azrael, the Angel of Death, accomplishes his mission by holding it to the nostrils, and in the prose Edda it is written, 'Iduna keeps in a box apples which the gods, when they feel old age approaching, have only to taste to become young again.'" Indeed, the legendary mythical lore connected with the apple is most extensive, a circumstance which fully explains its mystic character. Further, as Mr. Folkard points out,[2] in the popular tales of all countries the apple is represented as the principal magical fruit, in support of which he gives several interesting illustrations. Thus, "In the German folk-tale of 'The Man of Iron,' a princess throws a golden apple as a prize, which the hero catches three times, and carries off and wins." And in a French tale, "A singing apple is one of the marvels which Princess Belle-Etoile and her brothers and her cousin bring from the end of the world." The apple figures in many an Italian tale, and holds a prominent place in the Hungarian story of the Iron Ladislas.[3] But many of these so-called mystic trees and plants have been mentioned in the preceding pages in their association with lightning, witchcraft, demonology, and other branches of folk-lore, although numerous other curious instances are worthy of notice, some of which are collected together in the present chapter. Thus the nettle and milfoil, when carried about the person, were believed to drive away fear, and were, on this account, frequently worn in time of danger. The laurel preserved from misfortune, and in olden times we are told how the superstitious man, to be free from every chance of ill-luck, was wont to

carry a bay leaf in his mouth from morning till night. One of the remarkable virtues of the fruit of the balm was its prolonging the lives of those who partook of it to four or five hundred years, and Albertus Magnus, summing up the mystic qualities of the heliotrope, gives this piece of advice:--"Gather it in August, wrap it in a bay leaf with a wolf's tooth, and it will, if placed under the pillow, show a man who has been robbed where are his goods, and who has taken them. Also, if placed in a church, it will keep fixed in their places all the women present who have broken their marriage vow." It was formerly supposed that the cucumber had the power of killing by its great coldness, and the larch was considered impenetrable by fire; Evelyn describing it as "a goodly tree, which is of so strange a composition that 'twill hardly burn."

In addition to guarding the homestead from ill, the hellebore was regarded as a wonderful antidote against madness, and as such is spoken of by Burton, who introduces it among the emblems of his frontispiece, in his "Anatomie of Melancholy: "--

*"Borage and hellebore fill two scenes,
Sovereign plants to purge the veins
Of melancholy, and cheer the heart
Of those black fumes which make it smart;
To clear the brain of misty fogs,
Which dull our senses and Soul clogs;
The best medicine that e'er God made
For this malady, if well assay'd."*

But, as it has been observed, our forefathers, in strewing their floors with this plant, were introducing a real evil into their houses, instead of an imaginary one, the perfume having been considered highly pernicious to health.

In the many curious tales related of the mystic henbane may be quoted one noticed by Gerarde, who says: "The root boiled with vinegar, and the same holden hot in the mouth, easeth the pain of the teeth. The seed is used by mountebank tooth-drawers, which run about the country, to cause worms to come forth of the teeth, by burning it in a chafing-dish of coles, the party holding his mouth over the fume thereof; but some crafty companions, to gain money, convey small lute-strings into the water, persuading the patient that those small creepers came out of his mouth or other parts which he intended to cure." Shakespeare, it may be remembered, alludes to this superstition in "Much Ado About Nothing" (Act iii. sc. 2), where Leonato reproaches Don Pedro for sighing for the toothache, which he adds "is but a tumour or a worm." The notion is still current in Germany, where the following incantation is employed:--

*"Pear tree, I complain to thee
Three worms sting me."*

The henbane, too, according to a German belief, is said to attract rain, and in olden times was thought to produce sterility. Some critics have suggested that it is the plant referred to in "Macbeth" by Banquo (Act i. sc. 3):--

*"Have we eaten of the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner?"*

Although others think it is the hemlock. Anyhow, the henbane has long been in repute as a plant possessed of mysterious attributes, and Douce quotes the subjoined passage:--"Henbane, called insana, mad, for the use thereof is perillous, for if it be eate or dronke, it breedeth madness, or slowe lykeness of sleepe." In days gone by, when the mandrake was an object of superstitious veneration by reason of its supernatural character, the Germans made little idols of its root, which were consulted as oracles. Indeed, so much credence was attached to these images, that they were manufactured in very large quantities for exportation to various other countries, and realised good prices. Oftentimes substituted for the mandrake was the briony, which designing people sold at a good profit. Gerarde informs us, "How the idle drones, that have little or nothing to do but eat and drink, have bestowed some of their time in carving the roots of briony, forming them to the shape of men and women, which falsifying practice hath confirmed the error amongst the simple and unlearned people, who have taken them upon their report to be the true mandrakes." Oftentimes, too, the root of the briony was trained to grow into certain eccentric shapes, which were used as charms. Speaking of the mandrake, we may note that in France it was regarded as a species of elf, and nicknamed main de gloire; in connection with which Saint-Palaye describes a curious superstition:-- "When I asked a peasant one day why he was gathering mistletoe, he told me that at the foot of the oaks on which the mistletoe grew he had a mandrake; that this mandrake had lived in the earth from whence the mistletoe sprang; that he was a kind of mole; that he who found him was obliged to give him food--bread, meat, and some other nourishment; and that he who had once given him food was obliged to give it every day, and in the same quantity, without which the mandrake would assuredly cause the forgetful one to die. Two of his countrymen, whom he named to me, had, he said, lost their lives; but, as a recompense, this main de gloire returned on the morrow double what he had received the previous day. If one paid cash for the main de gloire's

food one day, he would find double the amount the following, and so with anything else. A certain countryman, whom he mentioned as still living, and who had become very rich, was believed to have owed his wealth to the fact that he had found one of these mains de gloire." Many other equally curious stories are told of the mandrake, a plant which, for its mystic qualities, has perhaps been unsurpassed; and it is no wonder that it was a dread object of superstitious fear, for Moore, speaking of its appearance, says:--

*"Such rank and deadly lustre dwells,
As in those hellish fires that light
The mandrake's charnel leaves at night."*

But these mandrake fables are mostly of foreign extraction and of very ancient date. Dr. Daubeny, in his "Roman Husbandry," has given a curious drawing from the Vienna MS. of Dioscorides in the fifth century, representing the Goddess of Discovery presenting to Dioscorides the root of the mandrake (of thoroughly human shape), which she has just pulled up, while the unfortunate dog which had been employed for that purpose is depicted in the agonies of death.

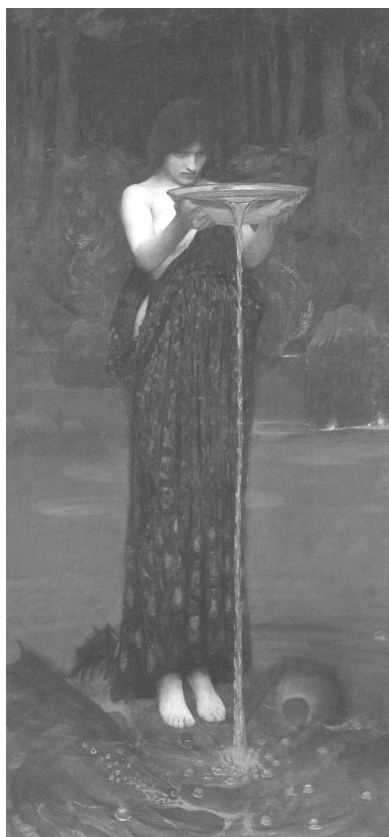
Basil, writes Lord Bacon in his "Natural History," if exposed too much to the sun, changes into wild thyme; and a Bavarian piece of folk-lore tells us that the person who, during an eclipse of the sun, throws an offering of palm with crumbs on the fire, will never be harmed by the sun. In Hesse, it is affirmed that with knots tied in willow one may slay a distant enemy; and according to a belief current in Iceland, the *Caltha palustris*, if taken with certain ceremonies and carried about, will prevent the bearer from having an angry word spoken to him. The virtues of the dittany were famous as far back as Plutarch's time, and Gerarde speaks of its marvellous efficacy in drawing forth splinters of wood, &c., and in the healing of wounds, especially those "made with envenomed weapons, arrows shot out of guns, and such like."

Then there is the old tradition to the effect that if boughs of oak be put into the earth, they will bring forth wild vines; and among the supernatural qualities of the holly recorded by Pliny, we are told that its flowers cause water to freeze, that it repels lightning, and that if a staff of its wood be thrown at any animal, even if it fall short of touching it, the animal will be so subdued by its influence as to return and lie down by it. Speaking, too, of the virtues of the peony, he thus writes:--"It hath been long received, and confirmed by divers trials, that the root of the male peony dried, tied to the necke, doth helpe the falling sickness, and likewise the incubus, which we call the mare. The cause of both these diseases, and especially of the epilepsie from the stomach, is the grossness of the vapours, which rise and enter into the cells of the brain,

and therefore the working is by extreme and subtle alternation which that simple hath." Worn as an amulet, the peony was a popular preservative against enchantment.

Footnotes:

1. Fraser's Magazine 1870, p. 709. 2. "Plant Lore Legends and Lyrics," p. 224. 3. See Miss Busk's "Folk-lore of Rome."



View the Complete Samhain Song Press catalog
of classic witchcraft and pagan quality reprints at

www.SamhainSong.com